

2001 Eckhart Tolle Omega Retreat May The Mind Be Servant of Awareness

[Speaker 1] (1:36 - 7:22:48)

Oh yes, we were going to check if it's still now. I think it is. That's a strange thing to, of course the way we did it just now it's a little bit funny, but just to, one could almost say you could, this is not quite right of course, it's language, but I'll say it.

One could almost say you could sense the now, be aware of it, not as something, but as a presence, an aliveness, not something. And so we've already fallen into an error of creating a subject and an object when we say you can become aware of the now. And that's what happens when one speaks, because that implies now there's two things here, there's you and that which you become aware of.

But the truth is, what we call the now is awareness itself that knows itself, but doesn't divide itself into two. And of course it cannot be from who you are, you are that awareness. That's the secret that frees you once you know it.

Now knowing it, this is not a knowing that is conceptual, because then you would have a belief, I am awareness could become a concept. But to know directly, here, now. So our practice is meeting the now fully.

We spoke of the possibility of allowing what is to be. And that means not imposing interpretations on it. So let's use the where we are, the setting here, the beauty that surrounds us.

Let's make it into part of our awareness practice during these days. And see if we can meet nature without imposing labels or mental labels or interpretations on it. That means we're working, working is not a good word, but one of these days that word is going to disappear from the language.

But not yet. Working with our sense perceptions. This is a very important, a very helpful way of stepping out of the stream of thinking.

A little, I've recently started to call it exits. The present of your mind, the present cell, the conditioned mind that most people identify with as themselves, as me, that present cell has hidden little exits, easy to overlook. It's not really locked, they're open.

And one such exit is quite simply sense perception. That to perceive something fully visual, auditory, takes you out of conditioned thinking. And anybody who perceives beauty is, no matter how briefly, able to step out of mind and perceive without interpretations or labeling, if only for one second.

But more than that, if you're very alert, now most people don't know this, because all

they know is their, whatever they perceive is immediately interpreted through the conditioned thought processes. It's compared to something else, you find some personal relationship to it, it reminds you of that, or you simply put a label on it and then you think you know what it is. And you inhabit a flat universe that lacks depth because the lent labels obscure to you the depth that there is, and the aliveness and the sacredness that there is in every living thing.

And living thing includes what the mind calls dead things. Living things includes everything, because everything is alive. Even the stone, if you looked into the stone, you could see that there's an intense aliveness there.

Physicists have done it in their way. They know that the stone is an alive energy field. And matter itself is alive.

It looks to us as impenetrable, solid and dead, but it's not. So no matter whether we would conventionally call it a living thing, you realize whatever you perceive is alive. But let's speak specifically here about nature, plant life and animal life.

Of course, mineral is also very beautiful. So usually you perceive through the screen of conceptualization. And that is a deep-seated habit that we inherit, a collective mental habit.

And perhaps until recently there was not much chance of getting out of it. But now the possibility is there of stepping out of that deep-seated collective conditioning and see that it is possible to meet perceptions in the field of simple awareness. In many of you, if you are alert, you can observe an interesting phenomenon.

When you first perceive something, it could be a visual perception, it could be an auditory perception, suddenly you hear a bird singing. Or visually, you turn this way and suddenly you see a tree in the most amazing colors. And if you're alert, you can catch that first moment of perception, auditory, visual.

Something new arises in the field of perception. And there's a little space always when something new enters your field of perception in which the labeling has not started yet. That is the moment, really the moment of true perception.

And that moment is a moment of inner stillness where thought processes don't operate. There's a gap. And then thought processes usually come in.

And that gap is missed by most people. And to the mind it is not significant, because to the mind all that is significant is the thoughts. If you can't think any thoughts about something, it is insignificant to the thinking mind.

And so I'm certain that there are many people in this room, not only who in the first moment of perception, almost everybody does that. The first moment of perception,

there is the freedom from labeling, but it's not recognized. But there are many of you here who already find in their everyday life there are moments of more prolonged non-labeling of perceptions.

And that is quite amazing. That is incredible shift in consciousness from the labeling mind to the free, unconditioned spaciousness in which that arises. And I suggest here as a practice to be alert, especially to that first moment.

And if you recognize that there's a moment when you first perceive something, a leaf, a stone, a tree, or the totality, a field, a grove of trees. And if you bring awareness to that, then that awareness itself will be there for longer. If you are aware of that space of awareness that is there the moment you first perceive something.

And then the sense perception happens within a field of stillness. That is, you bring the stillness into the sense. It is perceived against the background of stillness.

And then perhaps at some point the labeling mind may come in, if only to say, oh, you see, there's the stillness. It's possible. So that is a practice, especially these days that you're here.

Interact with nature in that way. Then, of course, everything becomes, really comes to life, becomes alive. However, there's something in you that doesn't want to do that.

Because there's the fear that you might be losing something important. And that fear is the fear of the mind, which says, I won't know anymore. The mind says, I won't even know what this is.

The strange thing is, all the mind knows is one particular kind of knowing that is through conceptualization, through labeling. There is a deeper knowing in which you know without the limitations of concepts. But that knowing is, to the mind, looks like not knowing anything anymore.

And really, that is the state in which a greater intelligence operates, perceives through you. But to the mind, it's like you've lost something. Of course, you haven't lost anything.

The labels, you know them when you need them. They are still there. You can get them out of the filing cabinet, or whatever analogy we can use in computer language.

I don't know that. Retrieve it from the data banks. Oh, that's it.

That's what it is. You retrieve it. When it's needed, the label is there.

A lot of the time, it's not only not needed, it limits you tremendously to be trapped in a world of labels. A conceptualized universe, when you only know concepts, labels, thoughts, you inhabit a conceptualized universe. Everything is immediately made into

concepts.

Some people are so good at it. Unfortunately, in our culture, the better you are at it, the more intelligent they think you are. If you can manipulate concepts.

And so, that's, you can get your PhDs in that way. I can, there's nothing wrong with PhDs, if you're not trapped there. And that conceptualized existence is not only something you do to nature, you do it to people, and to yourself.

You conceptualize your own life into a series of thought forms, and call it me. And then you do it to others. Conceptualize who people are.

And some people are very good at that too. The moment they meet somebody, they just look at you just to find out what makes you tick. And then after two or three minutes, they have it.

Now, sometimes that thing of just working out what this person is all about, some people are actually very good at it. But all they can ever find out is the conditioned mind of that person. And on that level, they may even be right.

On the level of the egoic, conditioned mind, what they say might be, I'm sometimes surprised when people come to me and say, what did you think of this person? And I say, I don't know. And then they say, well, let me tell you about him.

This is how he is. That's what he really wants. He's doing this in order to manipulate you and to do this and that and that.

Oh. Maybe they're right. But another thing that they do is then they get, they don't see that as being the level of conditioning.

And from then on, whenever they relate to that person, they relate through the screen of their interpretation, which, of course, no matter who you are dealing with, it is extremely narrow and limited. It is not the reality of that human being. It may be an aspect of the conditioning that is operating there, pretending to be somebody.

But it's not, it cannot touch the reality of that human being. Every human being carries all possibilities within, including Buddhahood, Christhood, every saint. And it has happened that the greatest criminal turned into a saint.

When the conditioned entity broke down, through intense suffering it can happen. Fortunately, not to you, because you're here. If you were not here, it would happen through intense suffering.

That is the grace that is there through suffering. It erodes. Eventually, suffering is created, you could say, by this mind-made entity to a large extent.

People create their own suffering. Humanity creates its own suffering. And yet, there is built into the egoic madness, the element of grace, and that is the very suffering that is created by that limited, exclusively personalized sense of self, destroys, in the end, that sense of self, that limited sense.

It erodes it. And so, sometimes you find in people who have suffered a lot, physically or in other ways, they become very simple, a childlike state, not childish, childlike. That is the state of great openness, clarity.

That is the state of being free of mind, where a deeper intelligence operates. And it happened to them through suffering. And to some of you, suffering brought you here, and the rest happens here.

So that gets eroded. During this week, it gets eroded in a more pleasant way here. Although some of you may be in suffering as you sit here.

Can't stand any more of this. And you project yourself away from here, seeing yourself in the car driving home. And if you do jump in the car and drive home in the middle of the retreat, then just before you get home, you will think that you have failed miserably.

You've left the retreat, and now it's all gone. It's always the other. The other, where you are not, is always where you should be, of course.

So what we called this morning, and it seemed a very, first a very passive thing, when this morning we said, when you allow what is to be the is-ness of this moment, then something reveals itself to you that is beyond the form that this moment takes. And the form may appear limiting. The formless life consciousness is known through not reacting to the forms that appear.

Where do they appear? In the field of now. If you react to the forms in the field of now, your own form, psychological form of me, gets strengthened.

That's why the me likes reacting. Because it strengthens that I. And you can observe it in other people or in yourself.

When you react against something, perhaps wanting to be right, or you can see how, on one level, satisfying it is. And why is it satisfying? In reality, of course, it's painful.

It is a form of pain. The body knows that, because the energy, it cannot flow anymore. The energy field of the body stagnates.

The body knows it's painful, but the egoic entity thinks it's great. Because you've enhanced your sense of self. The enemy is there, and it feels great.

And some people even say it feels great after shouting at somebody and say, oh, that feels better. And so observe that you allow it, and that takes you beyond form. Your

sense of self is no longer in form.

It is deeper than any form. So the easiest practice, and that's why we start here, is as you meet nature. Nature exists beyond mind.

Nature is pre-mind, one could say. It exists in a much greater state of oneness with a source than humans. Humans have gone out of that much further.

Nature is more deeply connected to the source, animals, plants. So to enter the state of what is ultimately a state of no thought, I wasn't going to say it so soon in the retreat, not to frighten anybody. The state of no thought it is helpful to meet any natural phenomenon, a plant, an animal that lives in that state of no thought.

They also are expressions of consciousness, but they don't inhabit a conceptualized universe. The dog does not have a self-concept or a problematic sense of self. A cat doesn't, or anything that lives.

The bird simply hasn't separated itself and says, that's me. It doesn't derive its sense of identity from conceptualization in the mind. It hasn't created that split.

It just is an expression of the one in form. Limited through its form, yes, but a beautiful expression of that. And so it is often a great meditation if you can watch a tree, a flower, or a dog, or a wild, or a bird.

It does not stimulate thought, because it operates beyond thought. Conscious, yes, but not through conceptualization. Now we are not returning to that state.

This is not where we are going, because that would be a falling back. It would free you from a lot of suffering, yes. And some people seek to return.

They can't stand their mind anymore. They cannot stand the painful sense of self, that burden that I have to live with, me, living with me every day is dreadful. I wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy to live.

I'm just giving an example. So many perceive life as a burden, a great burden, and every morning you wake up and you find yourself. Now you may think what you find is the problems in your life, but it really is the heaviness of the sense of self that looks out there for some kind of liberation or freedom and is not getting it.

All you ever encounter is some other limitation and little brief moments of apparent freedom which turn out to be illusions. So that is the self that has a heaviness to it. And an animal doesn't carry that burden.

It is limited through its form, yes, but it lives in alignment, in greater alignment than humans. And so its existence is not problematic, and it dies with great ease compared to humans. And in some cases human beings are kept sane by their animal.

That's why some people, they have a dog or a cat, and it's the one thing that keeps them, it's their anchor to a dimension beyond conceptualization and mind. They have this anchor there. So animals that humans keep fulfill an incredible function, an anchor of sanity.

And you can see with some animals how unhappy the master is, the owner of the animal, and how carefree the dog is. Even after having lived for five years with this person, the dog is still joyful, greeting every moment with joy. And so I saw a little sticker recently to put on the fridge which said, God, please let me be who my dog thinks I am.

Now, of course, the truth is that the dog doesn't think. That's why he's in joy. And that's why the dog relates to you.

He doesn't relate to the conceptualized you. He relates to the you beyond, that's hiding behind the conceptualized me with its problems. Amazing.

In everyone, of course, that dimension is there, the unconditioned, pure consciousness. And it's wanting to emerge. That's one way of putting it.

It wants to emerge. It wants to flower through humans. And that's why we are here.

So although you may have tried to escape from the prison of your conditioned mind by going into drugs or seeking some kind of escape, moving, wanting to get out of the mind, drinking sometimes helps a little bit, not for long, but you take, you're being, you're then taken into unconsciousness. You're moving out of your mind, yes, it feels liberating, yes, but you're moving towards sleep. And sometimes it's nice when you get very tired.

You can't think about your problems anymore. And then there's a moment before you reach sleep when you feel quite good. And then you go to sleep.

But we are not leaving mind by going that way. We are stepping beyond mind. And with that comes an alertness.

Freedom from thinking, yes, but at the same time there's wakefulness and alertness, not moving towards unconsciousness. But nature is very helpful because it teaches you to live in no mind. So in a way you meet, there's a deeper empathy with nature when you don't impose on it the screen of conceptualization.

There's a very deep meeting that takes place when you perceive nature in that way. And this is an ideal place surrounded by all this beauty of perceiving in that way. And it is a significant event, cosmic, going far beyond the personal when you perceive nature in the state of not labeling, in the state of still awareness.

Nature itself finds its fulfillment at that moment through you because you are not

separate. Within the oneness, nature sees itself through you. It loves that, its own sacredness.

The tree, the flower become aware of themselves. This sounds a little mystical, but that's how it is. So the essence here, we begin with nature because nature is so helpful.

Just be aware for a little while of when you first see something. Bring some alertness into when you walk around here, sit. Be there as a field of alert presence and see that it is quite possible to step out of the habitual labeling mind.

For how long doesn't matter really. More important is how often you step out of the labeling mind. Then the rest looks after itself.

Once that movement has started, and this is miraculous, the current of awareness that has begun to come through what before was a heavy layer of conditioned mind stuff, once this current of awareness has begun to move through you, it has an intelligence of its own. It is pure intelligence. And that then operates, it's become free and you don't have to be concerned very much.

It flowers by itself. So sense perception is extremely important here. It is one way in which you can leave the prison of the conditioned mind.

And then you may notice when you perceive in such a way, there's the form that you perceive, whatever it may be, and one could say there's a stillness in which the perception happens. That's the field of awareness. At first this is not something you can know as an object, because it's the very essence of all knowing.

You cannot know that as an object of knowledge. You can only be it. You are it.

And even here, sitting here, you can sit here and think about your story, or the next moment, or the last moment, where you're going to be. Or you can be here as a field of aware presence. And the goodness that we spoke of, that you find when you allow this moment to be as it is, because this is allowing this moment to be as it is, not imposing an interpretation.

And if an interpretation comes, recognize it as a mind, an interpretation. Not totally believe in it, not totally be absorbed by it, just see it. Yeah, there's the conditioned mind which comes up with its, whatever it says.

And then you go back to the perception itself. So the goodness that is hiding underneath, no matter what form this moment takes, that is an aspect of that unconditioned dimension in yourself. And that then emerges through you.

So it is not, it might have seemed when I said it at first, it was a very passive state, to say you can notice that there is a goodness underneath the appearance of this moment.

That is inseparable from the state of pure awareness, presence, whatever you want to call it, space consciousness. It emerges from there.

And everybody, even very unconscious human beings, unconscious means totally identified with conditioned mind, even very unconscious human beings sometimes very obscurely sense that there is something in them that is greater, of there is a goodness that they cannot quite access. It doesn't seem to operate when they operate in their everyday life. It may break through occasionally, accidentally almost, sometimes in moments of great danger when they're threatened by death, it could break through when the conditioned mind subsides because it can't cope anymore with the urgency of this moment.

So almost everybody senses that in some obscure way they know that there is something in them that is greater than what they manifest as their everyday existence that may be pitiful. What they manifest in their everyday life may not be great. There may be a lot of wanting and needing and me against you on a small level, whether it's on a little level or whether it's you become the CEO.

CEO is becoming a dirty word these days. But there's no difference on CEO. It's just on a bigger scale, a bigger egoic scale.

That's all. That's why it's more noticeable. The greed of the ego, the greed, the need for more.

There's a fly buzzing around my head looking for something. So that then what many people obscurely sense within emerges is an aspect of the unconditioned. Love, joy, aliveness, compassion, it dwells there in that dimension.

So then that also begins to operate through you in your interactions with the world, the unconditioned. So this is why it's what at first sight seems so insignificant when I say, go to nature, look at the tree, and be completely there in the looking. Allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness.

It first seems, well, okay. Okay, I've done that now. What do I do now?

Next thing. To the mind it seems insignificant. And yet nothing is of greater significance than that because it's through that the unconditioned emerges.

And then those qualities that are an inseparable part of that dimension flow out into this world. You begin interacting with nature because nature helps you. The next level up then is interacting with human beings that you know superficially, people you've just met, people that you come into contact with casually, people perhaps on the retreat that you meet, and we'll be addressing that in more detail also, to bring that non-labeling awareness into your interactions with other human beings.

Then an enormous change happens on the planet when more humans interact in the way in which you don't impose conceptualization on other humans. So we'll be addressing that more. Nature is easier.

Humans are more difficult. So you begin with nature, and nature will continue to be extremely helpful in this. And that in itself is of the benefit of, is incredible, the way in which that deepens your life, the way in which you interact with nature, the depth that is there when you allow the mystery that is every living being to be there.

Yes, you still know the label if you should need it, but the mystery that is there that is covered up by the label that says tree, the depth that is there is just inconceivable. And the aliveness that is there that some people have glimpsed when they took acid, that perhaps was their first time they glimpsed something that's beyond conceptualized mind, and the teapot suddenly became intensely alive. It wasn't a teapot anymore.

But then you've come back again. That is not the way. So this is much better than acid.

But for some people it's been a little glimpse of stepping out of the prison of conceptualized thought into an intense aliveness. So the mystery that is there, what, how absurd to think that you know when the moment you have put a label onto something. And children become conditioned at an early age in that way, when they learn language.

And the human mind wants that in the child, because the human mind says, what's that? And then the father or mother says, that's a tree. And then the child repeats, tree, tree.

And the illusion that the child then now knows what it is, it's already started. Next time, the next day, the child sees a tree. Before the child was looking, that was pre-mind.

And that you find in very young children, when you see them, mind hasn't started yet, and yet consciousness is already there of their surroundings. And they look, they are all little Buddhas. And then they look at you.

And that also, some humans are drawn to little children as they are drawn to animals, because they feel they are not being judged. They know that the dog or the little child, the pre-mind child, is not imposing a label on them. They find freedom there.

So they are drawn, whenever they see a little child, they go then, oh, yes, it's beautiful. And then a moment comes in the child's life when the conceptualizing mind wants to start. And the questions start, what is that?

It's demanding labels. So one day, the child is looking at the tree in openness and wonder. That is still the state of oneness.

And the next day, it has learned the word tree. And then it looks at the tree, and there's

still a moment, the gap is still there that I mentioned. And then it remembers the label tree.

Oh, tree, tree, tree. Yeah, that's right. That's what it is.

And now let's go on to the next thing. For many humans from that moment onwards, they don't really look at the tree anymore, because they think they know what it is. And this is just one tiny example of then thousands of concepts, and then being imprisoned in that, and then having concepts about me.

That's who you are. So going beyond all that is liberation. The ancient word that's been used for thousands of years, free.

Free from what? Free from the conditioned mind. So nature, that in itself is an enormous shift when you can go into nature and interact in that way.

And yes, you look upon everything, that is love. Anything that is not labeled as you perceive it is looked upon with love. Not the love that the mind talks about that says, come here, I'll lead you.

I love you because I need you. I won't let you go. You're mine.

Or I love this flower so much that I'm going to take it home with me. It's not that kind of love. Very wisely in the Spanish language, the expression I love you is the same as the expression I want you, because that is the usual way in which what is called love by the mind.

But the true love emerges whenever there's the absence of conceptualization, of labeling. And that is why the dog loves you continuously. And that is why the little child can look, no matter who the child looks upon, there is that openness.

It doesn't judge a person as ugly. The openness is there. The label isn't there yet.

So nature is an access point. It is an opening for that. But also, including inanimate nature.

Let's call it inanimate nature. There is the beautiful realm of minerals. Wonderful.

The earth itself, the stones, the aliveness that is there. And even man-made, human-made things have an aliveness, especially if there's still some closeness to nature, like things made of wood, natural materials. But even synthetic things, yes, they too are alive, a little bit more removed from the source, perhaps.

But yes, also a temporary expression of consciousness. So you can sit in your room, perhaps, let's say the room where you're staying here, or the room, let's say with here, and just briefly sit and be there, look around, perceive your surroundings without

needing to label. Innocent perception, you could call it.

Not wanting anything from something. Not comparing. Just letting it be.

Don't go on for too long, because from that state of having gone beyond mind, as this is something new for most humans, it is possible to go from that state of having gone beyond mind to a state of alertness, and suddenly you fall below mind into sleep. Until that becomes a more habitual state in you that can happen. So that's fine too.

Beautifully expressed, there was a film about golf playing, The Legend of Baga Vance, where somebody's learning to play, or relearning to play golf, and his teacher is showing him how to be present, how to be a step out of mind. In one line, the teacher says, he's now learning how to stop thinking without falling asleep, because only then can he play well. And every sportsman who does well knows that, that that state is the state of freedom from thinking.

Of absolute alertness, clarity, relaxed alertness and clarity. And so a few people, we mentioned artists earlier, some sportsmen have access to that in their field of activity. And here it is emerging as your normal state of consciousness.

It's becoming your normal state of consciousness. Thought is still there, yes. Will continue to be there for quite a while.

Quite a while. As long as you are here in the body, thought will also still be here. And yet, there's a freedom.

Thought moves, it is no longer problematic, it is no longer invested with self. You're not seeking yourself in thought forms anymore. That's liberation.

And thought is recognized as thought. You don't, you're not totally trapped in every thought that comes. So all that is the shift in consciousness that this gathering is part of.

Transitional period is when thought loses its capacity to make you unhappy. But it still operates. But you don't believe totally in the judgments of your mind anymore, about yourself, about your life, what it tells you about your life, how you have failed or been treated unfairly by life, whatever the story may be.

It's the old, conditioned thought forms. And your sense of self does not reside there anymore. So use the access, the exit, the little exit door that is nature.

Bring that alertness to your perceptions. That's nice. And then the thought subsides and there's more spacious presence.

And then some other thought comes. It's fine. And as you sit here, listen to these words as if they were coming from within you.

Because they are. They're not somebody else's words. The truth is coming through.

Consciousness speaks, that's all. It doesn't matter through which form it speaks. Consciousness speaks, is pointing the way back to itself.

So here too, you just simply sit here being present, alert, awake. That is the essence of all meditation. But it's no longer a separate activity.

It's now. Every moment. Once I had a group, we were addressing just this, and somebody put her hand up and said, when do we start meditating?

This is the meditation. And you are learning once the momentum of mind has taken you over again, and that will happen. It's been there for so long, it has a momentum still.

The mind will come back. It could come back even as you're sitting here, in which case you will no longer be here. You could be gone.

And you notice it, you're not seeing anymore, you're not perceiving anymore what's around you, only just enough not to bump into things. But when you can watch a person whose attention is totally drawn into thinking, there's very little outflow through eyes. There's an absence in the eyes.

I can demonstrate it, perhaps. Nobody there, not here. So your consciousness is being absorbed by thought processes.

It all goes in here. And then, not long after that, but if that happens to you, and it probably will at some point, and then you can then, suddenly you become aware that once this has started, it won't be very long before some form of suffering will appear. And then those thought processes will go more dense.

And then the emotions you will feel that accompany those thoughts. And then you might go to your partner and you say, you know I've been thinking. More often than not, whenever anybody comes to you and says, you know I've been thinking, you know here comes trouble.

And so that may happen to you, and then you will notice some form of suffering arising. And some form of suffering arises, and that's a little signal that says you must have lost the now. Where's the now?

Now? And that entity, one could call it, that is now there, it's a temporary little, because everything is life form. Every thought is a life form, and a conglomeration of thoughts pretending to be a personal me, is a temporary, one could say, life form, a temporary formation.

And that temporary formation wants to continue in existence as that formation. Like every life form wants to remain as that life form. It resists metamorphosis.

And I'm sure if we could know the inner life of a caterpillar, the caterpillar too would resist its metamorphosis into a butterfly until the last moment. No, I'm not becoming a butterfly. There is a certain inertia in every form.

The form, you can see it in children or sometimes adults. You're tired, but you don't want to go to bed, because there's an inertia in the state of being awake. You want to remain, you're not really awake anymore.

And then when you're in bed, you don't want to get out of bed. There's an inertia in that state. With children, you have it very often.

There's an inertia in every form. So the thought forms want to remain as those thought forms. So there is a, and that is the, they want, they will resist anything that would bring about a shift in consciousness.

So there is something in you, and it's fine, doesn't want to be free. And that's a strange realization. There is something in me that does not want to be free.

And that you might think, is that a personal fault of mine? No, there's nothing personal in that. That pretends to be a personal entity or personal matter.

That in me wants to be taken seriously and be somebody, me. But it is not a personal matter at all. It is a universal mind pattern, that principle of inertia is in you.

And it will find many reasons and excuses why you cannot be present now and why this moment is not important at all. Because I have far more important things to think about. It can give you many convincing arguments why it's not going to work for you.

You might as well forget it. It's all nonsense anyway. I mean, you've got all that nonsense about change in consciousness.

This is real. Your problems are real. The falling shares are real.

Your financial situation, that's real. And so it will come up, it will tell you what is real, what matters. Because it doesn't want to go.

And it comes up with things that you need to think about now. At night especially. Very important.

There's nothing you can do, you're lying there. And so what conventionally is called worry, it simply means uncontrolled, negative thought processes that are projecting themselves into future, if that's what worry is. I'm not sure it's not the dictionary definition, but totally identified with mind movement, creating situations and problems that are not here now.

What could happen, might happen, probably will happen. And so at night, those things

can start up very strongly. And so the possibility of you noticing that so that the other dimension can come in is greater now, especially after having endured or enjoyed our retreat here.

Even if you think, and you probably will think because the thinker doesn't know what's going on here, even if you think that nothing is happening here, sitting here is quite enough for something to shift inside you. And the thinker, even if the thinker says, no, it's not happening, nothing is going on. So to recognize the mind, to recognize the momentum behind it and the inertia that is there, it doesn't want to stop worrying.

The worrying entity, the thinker, do you think the thinker wants to stop thinking? Or do you think the worrier wants to stop worrying? Its whole existence is worrying.

Well, conventionally, you all know this because we all know people who you asked, who would they be if they couldn't worry about something? But that is a pattern more strongly developed in others, in some than in others, that is in everyone. So the thinker does not want the end of thinking.

The worrier, which is the thinker intensified, doesn't want the end of worrying. The worry has a momentum too, particularly if the pattern of worry gets connected to the latent pain, emotional pain that humans carry in here. And that's what the thinker likes to do.

The thinking entity, the self, to keep itself going, it links into the, what I sometimes call pain body, which is the accumulation of pain from the past that humans carry, the residue goes back a long way. It's collective to a large extent, collective human pain inherited through thousands of years of madness, hundreds of thousands of years of suffering inflicted by humans on themselves and on each other, and your personal life too. Every child suffers coming into this world through the unconsciousness around them.

And so you carry that inside and the worrier and the thinker and the mind made self, when they don't, when it's to gain more momentum, will link into that energy field of emotion, the old emotion of pain. And that will energize those mind movements. And that is what keeps the self entity going again and again very strongly.

The old pain that gives energy to thought processes. And you think you're worrying about certain things in your life, but really you're acting out 100,000 years of human pain that are here. And then the mind finds some kind of explanation.

It's made into something personal, me. So to bring presence into that, we'll be addressing in more detail the pain body also, but just here to see that when it happens. And once this movement has started, something is operating in you, an energy field, almost one could say a temporary entity.

It does not want an end to the pain. It does not want an end to the worry. It wants to

carry on worrying.

You can find that out for yourself. If at that moment somebody pointed out to you the possibility of stepping out of that, which is there, the possibility of recognizing that pattern and stepping out of it. If you are totally identified with a pattern, you will deny that possibility.

Because you are not speaking. The pattern is speaking. The conditioned entity is speaking.

And you will say, this is absolute nonsense. Whatever arguments it comes up with, it will say, there's no such thing as present moment. I'm not interested.

Leave me alone with that nonsense of present moment. This is what matters. And this is how it is.

That's what's going to happen. So to compensate, one could almost say for the enormous momentum of that, what we could call the movement of unconsciousness in humanity, which is not a personal problem, not anybody's personal problem. But that undeniably, very still, very powerful movement of unconsciousness that is in humanity.

Even after this retreat, you may not be totally free of that. May. And so what is needed, and yes, it is happening, the arising of that which is beyond that needs to be more powerful than that.

Not that it is fighting anything. It's not fighting that. In its vastness, it contains that and then dissolves it.

But the arising of presence needs to be intense. Otherwise, you will be totally drawn in again and again into the old movement of unconsciousness. Now, the question is, can you make that happen?

Can you make the arising of the unconditioned presence, can you make it more intense, or is it something that just happens by itself? And the answer is not clear-cut. It is yes and no.

Can you make it happen? Yes and no. From one perspective, yes.

You can, as I sometimes call it, you can take up the sort of presence that says, only this is real, only this moment is real. And what is the problem at this moment? That cuts through the problem-making conditioned mind, which needs past and future to continue to manufacture its problematic sense of self, to cut through, to access in yourself presence that cuts through all that and says, okay, stepping out of mind by choice into the aliveness and freedom of this moment.

You can do that, one could say. You can do what the Zen master described as the

essence of Zen when he raised, he would only ever do one thing when he asked, what is the essence of Zen? This, intense presence.

He never said that. Aliveness, presence, be here fully. And that is something you can do.

You can choose presence. Now, nothing that I say or anybody says is totally true. And even that statement is not totally true.

Reality is far deeper than could ever be contained in any one statement. You can choose presence because presence is already arising in you and through you. And that can give you the feeling that, yes, I can choose presence, and that's good.

I wouldn't say that to anybody because it would not be true for them. If not enough presence is arising, you can't choose presence. So let's, why not, instead of trying to somehow resolve the paradox of the seemingly contradictory statements, why not allow the seemingly contradictory statements to be there because they point beyond themselves to a greater truth?

The mind says, no, let's work this out, yes or no? And it would even fight. If it has chosen the yes, it'll fight against the no.

And that is a wonderful thing because, and we can do that now, this is an example of allowing mental positions to be there and allowing different mental positions to coexist also without believing that one position encapsulates the entire truth. Now, the mind will tell you, will you not, will I not become totally paralyzed because I won't know what to do anymore? If I do not subscribe to one way of looking at things, what was going to be the motivating factor?

And the motivating factor will no longer be thought. The intelligence of the unconditioned consciousness will motivate you, things will happen, it will move through you, and action will happen when it's needed. But not through adopting and defending a mental position, because defending my mental position, whatever it may be, implies you're fighting other mental positions.

And an extreme manifestation of that is the terrorist, for example, or whatever else. It's totally being trapped in a conceptualized sense of us or self and totally making a conceptualized identity for others so that they are not alive anymore. Other humans are mental concepts.

As such, it is totally fine to kill them because they are no more than they are dead mental concepts. Whatever label you have put onto them, you have already killed them with your labels. Whether or not you then kill them physically doesn't really, almost doesn't matter anymore, you've done it already, almost.

So being trapped in conceptualization, the movement of unconsciousness is still in you,

yes? The choice is there now. For the choice to be there, you need to recognize that you've been trapped in mind, that you are trapped in mind.

And a good sign is suffering in your life, any kind of suffering. You've lost the now. Re-enter the now.

One way is sense perceptions to truly, in the way that we described, truly perceive acute, with acute awareness. Another one is allowing this moment to be as it is. It's a little exit too.

And a beautiful one is the inner body feeling the aliveness in your inner energy field that takes attention away from thinking. That's another exit out of the prison of mind. That may be particularly helpful when the worry pattern starts, if that's the pattern.

Worry is a form of fear. At night, for example. All that's needed is notice that it's happening to you.

That requires already a minimum of awareness. If you don't have that, you have no choice. Because you are totally the worrier.

Worry, W-O. And the other one too. You're totally the worrier, and then you have no choice.

So the fact that there is choice means there's at least a minimum of awareness, even in the midst of unconsciousness, being taken over by the momentum of the mind, there's still the minimum of awareness that knows that you're being taken over by the mind. And in that moment, choice becomes in. But that is not up to you.

It's by the grace of the divine that that minimum of awareness is there in you. And there, the choice is there. And again, it's only a perspective to step out.

And the worrier will tell you, no, I can't. No point. That's another thought.

Should you totally believe in that thought? No. There's a thought that says you can't possibly get out of it.

And you really need to think about this. And then you do it anyway. That mind is very clever with arguments and trying to convince you why not.

And then you do it anyway. You can't possibly, you can't feel the inner body now. What's the point in even trying to feel the inner body with what's going on in here?

There's no point in even trying. And then you do it anyway. And then you sense there's an aliveness in your hands and your feet and the rest of the body.

Who says you can't feel your body? That was just a thought. And then attention moves

there.

And it is quite possible within a minute or two, you can shift from a boring entity to feeling intensely alive and present in your entire energy field. And that means the inner body becomes an anchor for staying present. It's your anchor.

And then you will notice the pull of the mind of wanting your attention back. And it will then come up with some other thought. Just before you go in, just think about this.

And then it pulls your attention half out again. And for a moment, you're back in that. And then you notice it again and you're back in the body.

And then you have to walk on the razor's edge of now or the rest of lying awake that night. Because if you leave the now, you suffer. And another thought comes, you leave the now.

And then you're back. That is beautiful practice. Most of you probably drive cars.

Another wonderful field of practice to drive your car in presence. You're less likely to have an accident also. Mostly when you drive your car, you're thinking about something else.

It's on automatic. You're not thinking about the driving and nor should you be because you wouldn't be driving very well if you were thinking about so it's automatic. Something else is driving.

But why not just be still while you drive and perceive everything. Very aware of the movement. Very alert.

It's amazing how many people personalize the act of driving. So it's regarded as normal. They personalize going from A to B behind the wheel of a car.

It becomes a personal struggle. With other drivers, they get angry. They shout.

It's simply the movement of traffic. No different from the weather or any other movement, life movement. But they personalize it because the me strengthened itself through having, where's my enemy?

The enemy is right there. I always say, beware of driving pain bodies. What does a driving pain body want without knowing it?

The driving pain body wants something to go wrong, to have more pain. And sooner or later it will. All that he or she needs is another driving pain body in the vicinity.

So our practice here for nature, your own room, walking from A to B, not making that movement into a means to an end, needing to get there. Just be there every step. It's

the next step is not going to be more important than this one.

The arriving is not going to be more important than this moment. Be there within every step. Walk along around the campus here as a field of aware, alert, alive presence without carrying the burden of your story and think about it as you walk.

Or I say, I wonder what's going on in the world. What's in the news? Not good.

It wasn't good last week. It's not good this week. And when you get home and you listen to the news again, it'll still be the same.

The news are very selective. The collective mind says this is important and this is important and this is important. That's the news.

It overlooks a lot. There's a wonderful person living here on campus, a great artist. He arranges all these flower arrangements that we see in different places with leaves and most incredible awareness has gone into that.

I believe his name is Jonathan. I remember rightly from last year. Just the most amazing example of beauty that is created whenever something is being performed in the state of presence and the love that flows into the doing naturally, any doing that arises out of presence.

And he can take any objects, a few dead leaves or dying leaves, a little bit of moss and a little bit of that and puts it together and it's a creation of great beauty. That is also very helpful to look upon anything that was created out of that state of consciousness, can reflect that state back to you, can give you a reflection of that state. That's the essence of art probably, to give you a reflection of the state out of which it came, which shines through the form.

Every great work of art is more than what you see. And it can't really define it through concepts. It's always more.

Something shines through that is not the form and that is the state of consciousness out of which it came. And when you look upon it rightly, which means in the state of aware presence, it can strengthen and deepen that state in you. That is the beauty of art.

And probably even relatively unconscious human beings, deep down they can sense something when they look at a work of art. And they may treasure it. It's very deep, they feel something.

They don't always recognize it. There's probably been great art that's never been recognized. And in the case of some great artists, they were never recognized in their lifetime.

I don't know who, perhaps it was Van Gogh, who never sold a single painting in his

lifetime. Nobody wanted to, not interested. Nobody was really looking.

So something shines through. And even anything a craftsman makes can also happen. It doesn't have to be a great painting.

Anything that a craftsman has spent a long time being present with, not a means to an end, giving attention, the flow of attention, which is awareness, which is presence, goes into that. And then the object embodies that. It embodies quality in its deepest sense.

And it's always an aspect of sacredness to that, always. But whether or not you make something, only a few of you will be making something with your hands or in whatever way, presence manifests in so many different ways. It can also manifest entirely outside the world of form with just you sitting there, listening to someone, not even saying anything, just being there as spacious presence.

One more thing here. Little movements. Perform little movements and be present with that.

Just little, whatever you might be doing naturally, when you put on your shoes or your feet move into your sandals or you tie your shoelaces. Usually you would be thinking about the next thing, but why not just be there? And there's a stillness around the action in which the action happens.

Walking down a few steps or wherever it may be, or any habitual action. Don't make it too long at first. You might get lost in thought.

If you say, I'm going to perform making this cup of tea in presence, might be too much because you have to fill the kettle, you have to wait for it to boil, and by then you might be off somewhere. Why not just, while you stir the cup of tea, something that would be totally unnoticed, not noticeable to you in the normal state of consciousness, just small actions. Little bit of honey in the tea, if you take honey.

And there was a space of no thought, just that. Anything that's short, that you do often. Lighting a candle, you don't have candles here, you're not supposed to have candles.

Pouring liquid, water or juice. Little spaces in your life. And then more and more spaces, and then some spaces come naturally by themselves.

And sooner or later you might find a big space. It all implies getting out of living in that conceptualized me in the head. I suggest, stay for a little while with the empty chair, until you find yourself getting up.

When you find yourself getting up, it's time to get up. Thank you. A person was studying with a Zen master.

It was time to leave and go home, and so he came to the master and said, can you write

something in my book? Something that I can then remember, remind myself of something important about Zen. It's already a sign, of course, that he didn't get it.

And so he gave him the book, and the Zen master wrote something in it, and he looked, and he saw he'd written, attention, in Japanese, presumably. Just one little symbol, probably shorter than our language. Is that all, he said?

Surely, can you say a little bit more, please? And he gave it back to the master, and the master wrote something else, and he looked, attention, attention. And he said, oh, come on, surely, there's more than that to Zen.

And he gave it back, please, just a little bit more. And he got the book back, attention, attention, attention. What is this attention?

Well, it's interesting, but anyway, what does attention mean, anyway, he asked the master, what does it mean? And the master said, attention means attention. With Zen stories, you never know whether that's the end or not.

But that is the end. Now you notice an interesting story. You can notice two things.

The mind's need for more, say a bit more, and then the need for further explanation. What does attention mean? He wants more explanation of what it, and so that is why he doesn't get it, because he is seeking the answer in the realm of thought still.

That's why he's asking, really saying, give me a little bit more to think about, so that I can understand what Zen is, through thought. And of course, the essence of Zen is knowing the dimension of consciousness that is beyond thought. Not that that is something that you can achieve or attain, another obstacle is that belief, but that dimension is already there.

That's the strange paradox. In you, so to speak, ultimately, within and without are one. That dimension of consciousness is already there.

It is, to a large extent, obscured by thought, by constant preoccupation with thought, but without it, thought couldn't even be there. It is, one could say, the medium in which all thought forms are floating, and it is there in between two thoughts that may be very brief in many people, these gaps. It is there in the first moment of perception.

It may be there when you wake up in the morning, and the machinery of thinking hasn't started up yet, the first moment of opening your eyes. At that moment, there is certain things already that are being perceived, but there's also that beautiful field of still attention in which the perception takes place that is sensed as a kind of background piece. The foreground is that which arises in the first instance, sense perceptions.

Then, thoughts, perhaps, arise in it. Thoughts are arising here at this moment, but they

haven't taken over. So even though thoughts are happening, that dimension that is beyond thought is as present or more present here than the thoughts.

And it is possible to live in such a way that you are conscious continually of this background field. Even when thoughts happen, it does not depend on whether thoughts are there or not. That frees you from excessive identification with and attachment to the forms of this life, whether they be external forms that come into your life, things, people, situations, circumstances, or thought forms.

It frees you from excessive attachment, excessive identification with the thought forms and the emotional forms also. There's the flux, the continuous flux of phenomenal existence, within and without. Ultimately, it's all within.

The entire world, one could say, takes place within you. And it's all happening against this background. One could compare it perhaps to water that's everywhere, and all these things swimming in it.

And then the fish says, where's the water? I've been looking for it all my life. And the water makes up the very essence of the fish.

It's not just around the fish. The fish, too, is mostly water. Just a little analogy.

This is something very obvious. Subtle, yes, but so natural could be, potentially, for a human being to live in connectedness with that dimension. And not to sense that, not to know that, not knowing in a subject-object relationship, but to know it as the essence of I.

No longer I am that, because that refers to some kind of form, or name, or identification. Just the essence of I am. Not to know that is really to be deprived of the most important thing of all, which is a no-thing.

The only thing that absolutely matters in one's life is to know that. Everything else may matter also, but only relatively. Whether you are healthy or ill matters, but only relatively.

Whether you are in prison or in a beautiful home matters, but only relatively. If the prisoner in prison knows that dimension within, then he's much better off than you are in the mansion. And if the person in hospital bed knows that, perhaps even sensing the approach of death, and it may have come because there's the impending undoing of the physical form, which for some people is one way of encountering that dimension.

It's a little bit late, but it's fine. And from there, your whole life, your whole past suddenly makes sense, because it brought you to the flowering, to that point. The old past, which otherwise perhaps is a some meaningless accumulation of events, and in some people's lives, even seemingly meaningless, absurd events, or a series of what looks like

mistakes, a series of things that shouldn't have happened to me, were not really meant to happen, but they happened.

People are trying to make sense of their life on the relative level, but you can't. Whatever edifice you build up mentally, something will come, and you will no longer be able to make sense of it. Collectively, it can happen when a collective disaster happens, such as last year in September, not far from here, and suddenly people cannot make sense anymore.

The explanations fail. Let them fail. It's good when the mind's attempt to explain, to form some philosophy on which I can base my life, fails.

That looks like bad news to the mind, but it's good. And here, it's also failing, as we are sitting here. I'm taking away from you, well not really, you are voluntarily letting go of identification with all that.

I am my name, and my story, and my thoughts, and my emotions, me. So this sitting here is so easy if you are fully here, and that's all that's needed for that dimension to emerge from within you, and it's so subtle. Where is it?

It's there the moment, even if you say, where is it? And instead of thinking where it is, you so to speak, listen to find it. Where is it?

Listen really is an analogy for attention. Where is it? And your attention is there, as if you were listening.

That's it. Pure field of attention. That's why Jesus used some of these parables of waiting for somebody to arrive.

Waiting not in the usual sense of impatience, when is it going to happen, but of alertness. When is he or she going to come? That kind of waiting.

It's the same state, you might notice, that is there when you look at something in the state of a tree, a flower, in the state of attention. So no matter what happens in your life, there are always two dimensions, one could say, in your life. Now most humans are lost in one dimension completely.

That's the dimension of the manifested world, the world of form, the world of phenomena, the world of time, of thought. They're totally, they don't know anything else. And then there's the world, the dimension, not the world, the dimension of the unmanifested, the one life, prior to form.

The one consciousness that underlies all life, no matter whether it's life on this planet, or somewhere else on the, in this galaxy, or one other, another galaxy of those billions of galaxies. The one life prior to form, the one consciousness, one could almost say, that

which was there before the universe happened, continues to be there even now. Scientists ask and puzzle over the question, what was there before the Big Bang?

Big Bang is the, they say, is when it all started. Out of one point, or out of nothingness, came a whole universe. And what was there before then?

And what was there before time started? The mind stops. So scientists maybe haven't quite realized that they come up, these days, physicists come up with Koans, Zen questions, that have no logical answer.

All you get is the mind comes to a stop. And when the mind comes to a stop, that's the answer. That's the, that is the stillness of the unmanifested.

And compared to the mind forms, it is so subtle that at first you say, well, um, uh, and it's the most powerful. The only power there is, the only, the essence of all life forms is that. And it is that, it's only when you know that within yourself, as the deepest, I am in its deepest sense, a simple sense of presence, or I am-ness, that's left when you forget your name.

And when you forget your story, what's left is the, that which always was the essence of your story. The one thing that gave you a sense of I, so precious, and that got mixed up with form, with the story of me. So your, your sense of identity, then you think it's in the story of me, but really it, it is hiding beyond the story.

It just gets mixed up with the forms, the memories, the thought forms, because, so the innermost essence of who you are, even the story of you, is true. That innermost sense that there is something so precious here that, and then because it gets mixed up with form, people have this fear that they could lose that through death. But that's the one thing that is not lost.

The essence, it is consciousness itself. So that's what's left when the form goes. And some people need to experience death to find it.

Death means a form dissolves and leaves an opening into the formless. That's why death is sacred. Now, the opening may not be there for very long.

It gets covered up quickly. And that's why even there are sacred places where great humans who, early flowerings of conscious, of human consciousness, as I call them, who broke through to that dimension, and the place where they died is considered sacred. But any place where death happens is sacred, because a form dissolved.

And for that moment of death, the formless shines through that opening. And of course, there is such a thing as psychological death, which is when the identification with the psychological me dissolves, sometimes through intense suffering caused by identification with the psychological me. It's a beautiful paradox.

Nothing that happens is not right. It may look mad, but even within the madness, the universe is unfolding as it should. So the essence of your identity, I am, that's what's left when all identifications have gone.

Presence, beingness. I have difficulty with names, remembering names, because they don't seem that important. The being underneath the name, that's a different matter.

That's why I got the name wrong, this wonderful artist who does these flower arrangements here. His name is Anthony. And whenever I meet him, there's no, I don't meet a name.

There's simply a meeting on the level of essence, on the level of consciousness. That's why I didn't remember the name. And so the world is then recognized as relatively important, but it loses its overriding importance, seriousness, and heaviness.

And it's, I feel there's so much compassion when I see people, how they, how important things are to them. How, what importance they give, not only to physical things, how much importance they give to situations and what happens or doesn't happen, or a circumstance, or it's how much power they place there in the world of form. And it always, they expect something from it that only the formless can give.

They expect to find themselves somewhere in there. They expect happiness through the world of form. It can give you happiness briefly, and then it takes it away.

So you become dependent on what happens or doesn't happen. And sometimes it's the littlest, the tiniest things that make people unhappy. And they, I asked, why are you unhappy?

Well, this, this has just happened. This, what does it matter? So it's the, the impossible expectation that people place on the world.

It says, fulfill me, make me happy. The world means places, people, situations, circumstances, doesn't matter. All that means the world.

So they make these, they have these expectations and demands and no place, no person, no situation, no circumstance can meet those demands for long. And this is why life is experienced by most humans as very frustrating, almost designed by some devious God to frustrate you. And many people experience their life as it's designed to frustrate me continuously.

I've tried so hard and always something happens to frustrate me. Of course, there is an impossible demand being placed upon the phenomenal universe. And that demand is not only make me happy, because true happiness in the deepest sense is simply knowing yourself who you are beyond the forms, is true and lasting joy and happiness.

But they are looking for happiness through some imagined configuration of forms. When my life, when those forms in my life, those circumstances, people, places are in the right configuration, then it will be fine. And it could even happen that for a brief moment, they are in the right configuration.

You just moved to a beautiful new home. You just fell in love. And the stock market has just gone up.

And you're told, the doctor says, you're the most healthy, you have the most healthy body I've ever seen. Everything is just right. And then probably you would claim, the ego would claim some merit or achievement.

It would say, I did that. And because the world of form, although forms look solid, this is the illusion when you walk around, especially in a city, the solid structures and man-made, the solidity of everything, form looks so solid. And that's an illusion.

We don't realize that the world of form is very much like vapor or mist. Physicists know that too. They know that there's nothing solid here.

Even the most solid building can collapse in a moment. The grandest edifice, whether it be an office building or a temple, can collapse at any moment. And sometimes they do.

So the apparent or solidity of form is an illusion. To anybody who hasn't been to India, I recommend at least going there once to experience that the physical universe, the solidity of the physical universe is an illusion. In India, it's much easier to know that, because things are not that solid in the physical realm.

Things could go wrong at any moment. And it's beautiful. And that's maybe the reason why India has produced the greatest sages from the very first spiritual awakening of humanity happened there.

Perhaps because the physical realm is less solid, or the illusion is less, the illusion of solidity is less there than here. So because of the illusion of solidity, you believe that there can be something permanent in the phenomenal realm. But very quickly, here too, things shift, change, leave you, or make you unhappy.

Today, it makes you happy. Tomorrow, it makes you unhappy, that beautiful position that you got. The husband or wife makes you happy, then makes you unhappy.

Anybody who has been through more than one marriage, and even those who are still in one marriage, know that the person who makes you happy is also the person who makes you unhappy. So the demands that people place upon the manifested world are impossible. So, make me happy.

And when that, the only way, when that demand is dropped, and sometimes this

dropping, this letting go of that demand can happen when the world has totally frustrated you. Totally. So much has gone wrong, so to speak, which means not really wrong, but against the expectations, against what I wanted and needed, that you let go of any further expectations, not in a negative sense, because if you let go of any further expectations in a negative sense, that means then you are saying, who cares?

I don't want to know anymore. I'm done with the world. You're not.

There's still a lot of attachment. But a true letting go, when perhaps you even smile or laugh, it's gone. It's all crumbled once again.

And no further expectations are placed upon the manifested. And suddenly you sense this enormous peace. What is that?

Everything has gone wrong, and yet there's this deep sense of rightness. So that can happen in cases where people become totally frustrated. It can also happen in a spiritual teaching to see, when you are ready to see, that readiness is there because the frustrations have already been there.

You wouldn't have come otherwise. That's already been there. And then suddenly you see the demands.

And part of the demands, very essential part of this demand that is placed upon the phenomenal world is the demand that the future should make you happy, because that is very, the next moment, the need for the next moment. And it is a great act of letting go when the psychological need for the next moment is relinquished. That's always an essential part of coming to an end of placing expectations, because every expectation that you place upon the world to some extent implies future.

And so it's a wonderful thing that demands that are made upon places, people or situations or circumstances are not there. And then you are comfortable with places as they are, because no matter what place you go to, it could be ideal in your imagination when you actually get there, something will be there that is not ideal, any, whatever place you go to, and person and circumstance. And that's the thing that frustrates you.

And that demand is not made anymore. It could be a simple thing, even demands you place upon people. Understand me.

He doesn't understand me. My parents don't understand me. My children don't understand me.

So, is that so bad? They understand what they can understand. Their stage of evolution, they understand just enough for them to understand.

They are okay with not understanding. You don't realize that nothing is added to you by

having somebody understand you, except a psychological thought form that you then say, oh, it's confirmation that I exist. He's confirmed that I exist.

What is that existence that needs confirmation that you exist, or confirmation of the world? Some people think they need fame. Fame is totally overrated.

There's nothing in it. That's why some famous actors are interested in this teaching. They realized how empty that thing is called fame.

If fame fulfilled them, would they come to this teaching? What for? They're fulfilled by fame, by recognition.

Everybody recognizes how beautiful or great they are. So, isn't that fulfilling? No.

You think it's fulfilling when you don't have it. And when you have it, it's fulfilling for a little moment, and then it's no longer fulfilling. And you see, it's another way of finding this dimension.

One way is being totally frustrated and getting nothing. Another way is getting everything and being totally frustrated. And some famous actors go to drugs.

They try to deaden the frustration that they feel, which ultimately is a form of pain. They try to deaden it that way. Famous people, many have been very unhappy, committed suicide.

But some others see that. So, it doesn't really matter whether it's through achieving everything or achieving nothing, you find it. For most of you, it's kind of a mixture.

You've perhaps experienced success to some extent and failure to some extent. And you've experienced success turning into its opposite. So, that is the realization that everything in this phenomenal world is fleeting.

The Buddha came up with that realization. It's impermanent, everything that you encounter. He said there are three characteristics of human existence.

Everything is fleeting. There's no self in it. If you're seeking a self in any situation through an enhanced sense of self, this is why people make these demands upon the world.

Make me happy. Make me feel fully who I am. Make me know myself fully.

It's really because happiness is knowing yourself in the deepest level. So, when you say, make me happy, you're saying to the world, help me find myself. Enhance my deficient sense of self, this feeling of not enough yet, yet, this feeling of lack, not being fully myself yet.

Please help me get there, this person. Maybe if they understand me, they'll add something to me. Maybe if the world recognizes my worth, I can add that to me and that will do it.

Some achievement. And nothing works. So, it's a self-seeking.

This demand that is placed upon the world is ultimately a self-seeking in the world through the things of the world, the forms, the phenomenal, and that's why it's frustrating. There's no self in any of these things that the Buddha said. Anatta is the word in Pali uses.

The characteristic of all conditions is anatta, no self. And another characteristic, there are three characteristics. One is no self.

And that was a long time ago. One of the first flowers of humanity saw that no self, impermanence, anicca, and dukkha is, that sounds negative at first, but this is exactly what we've been talking about. It means the third characteristic, suffering.

It makes you suffer. What that means, dukkha, suffering. Suffering is one translation.

Another translation is misery. Another translation is unsatisfactoriness. And there are other translations, some are quite funny.

But they all point to that basic element that you find no matter what condition you encounter externally in this life, you'll find that somewhere. That's why it's so frustrating. Dukkha, anicca, anatta, the three characteristics, when you do not know who you are.

He didn't add that. He just said that, but then he pointed the way beyond also. Now, when you know who you are, and that's a strange way of putting it, all that it means is knowing the realm that is beyond form, beyond thought, the stillness that is here now.

What the Buddhists sometimes call emptiness, which is fullness also, but does not contain forms, fullness and emptiness prior to forms. It is that which Jesus points to when he says, I want you to have life in its fullness, sometimes translated as abundant life. That's what his teaching also is pointing to.

Obviously, he's not talking about proliferation of things. That was not part of the teaching, because that is mistaken when you are only aware of things and not aware of awareness, because that's what it is. When you are only aware of things, not aware of awareness, self-aware, I am, when you're not self-aware, then when somebody speaks of the fullness of life or abundant life, all you can think of is more things.

And this is why the Western civilization that kind of lost its way from the source, but that's fine too. It's all part of how it should be. Getting lost is good too.

That's why Western civilization came up with shopping malls, because all they can think

of the fullness abundant life must be more and more things. So let's create more and more shopping malls and fill them up with more and more things. And this must be the kingdom of heaven that Jesus pointed to.

But all the people who are running around shopping malls feeling frustrated, somehow they are perhaps beginning to see that that is not the fullness of life. By the way, there's nothing wrong with shopping malls. You can enjoy walking through shopping malls when you don't need them anymore.

But when many humans don't need them anymore, then I don't know what will happen to them. I sometimes enjoy for not too long walking through shopping malls and just looking at the world of form, so many forms, and then it's enough. So that's why the fullness of life is not more of things, but it does not refer to that dimension.

It refers to the dimension of depth, that fullness that is there already within you, for which you don't need future. The fullness that is already the essence of your being now, how could you need future to get there? So these three characteristics that the Buddha pointed to, impermanence, no self, and misery, that is true as long as you don't know the dimension of depth.

You don't know who you are beyond identifications. You don't know the I am before it becomes a story, before it becomes a thought. Then, yes, then life is suffering.

And every situation that you go into, you'll find it there somewhere. But when you know the unmanifested, the I am, then the expectations that are being placed upon the world, people, places, situations, circumstances, are not there. And the strange thing is that then, when the expectation is not placed upon them, people, places, circumstances, and situations are quite pleasant.

You can actually quite enjoy them. You enjoy places without the demand that they should be in a particular way. You can ultimately, it comes down to, you can enjoy the is-ness of what is now, no matter what form this now takes.

You enjoy the forms, whereas if you needed the forms to be in a certain way, then it never quite worked. You needed the forms to be in a certain way for your happiness, never quite worked, not for long. When you don't need it, then suddenly the world of form can be enjoyed.

It's a beautiful play of form. The neediness isn't there, and it's only then that you can truly enjoy. So it's not this teaching and the true spiritual teaching, any true spiritual teaching, there's only one, is not a rejection of that dimension of the world.

But it becomes accepted, it becomes, you embrace that in the vastness of who you are, that world of form is playing itself out, continuously fluctuating forms. You can enjoy it, and even, amazing thing is, you love it. But you love not the form, I love the flower, I

love you without knowing your story or your name, because what I love is the formless essence that I sense.

Only because I know it in myself, I can sense it in you. And sensing it in you, sensing what is my essence in you, is the realization that we are ultimately not separate. And that also applies to any living thing, and even all things are living, but let's talk about nature.

It applies to the flower, it applies to the tree, the cat, the dog. I sense myself in them. You could say God.

Sometimes there is a term, a Christian term, which is beautiful, loving the creator in the creature. Loving the creature is loving the form. That really isn't loving, it's attachment.

My form seeking to enhance itself through adding your form to my form, and completing me somehow, that's the illusion. But loving the formless in the form is recognition of oneness, and that is love. And so, that is how even what you experience as the world of form, undergoes a change when you know the formless within yourself.

What you experience as the external universe takes on greater harmony. Your world, your life, takes on a more harmonious flow. You're still for a while on this mad planet.

Well, the only mad thing about the planet is at the humanity. But the planet is beautiful, and humans are beautiful too. It's just a temporary mental illness, because they have come to the end of an evolutionary cycle.

And it's turned into some, the end of a cycle becomes dysfunctional, because a new cycle, a deepening is happening. The end of this evolutionary cycle, yes, looks like madness. Things are not working.

Things are breaking down. Great. That's supposed to happen.

And the madness increases as the mind-identified state of consciousness, based entirely upon thinking, where humans derive their identity from thinking, that is coming to an end. And so, that's beautiful, and you don't even need to believe that. Most of the things I say here don't require belief, because you can, you know for yourself that it's true.

If you don't believe, if you believe that it's not happening, that's fine too. The only question is, here, is it happening here? The shift.

And it is. So yes, you're still on this planet. You witness dysfunction.

You can also still feel to some extent the pain of this planet. Sometimes you can still feel it. It's no longer, it's not personal matter anymore.

You may still encounter pain body, collective pain body manifesting in you. It's not your

personal problem anymore. It is recognized as human pain.

It is accepted for what it is. Gently, compassionately, you have compassion with your own emotional pain, which isn't your own at all. It just looks like it.

It's human pain. You have compassion with that. You accept that also.

And so you realize that acceptance of all the openings into that dimension, perhaps the most beautiful, the one that works immediately, without the need for any kind of time, is acceptance. That takes you to knowing the unmanifested within yourself. Acceptance of the manifested.

If it's pain, that's what it is. The spaciousness of the unmanifested is there as soon as you accept something fully. And then it changes.

Then, this is why I'm saying, when you live in connectedness with that state, even the external changes, yes, it's still mad, but things around you, places and people around you, unfold more harmoniously and it spreads. Your consciousness spreads out and affects the world around you, which becomes a more harmonious place, a place where love is there. You see love suddenly because it comes from within you and then you see it reflected, coming towards you from others.

And that's a little miracle when you don't need the world of things, the phenomenal to be in a certain way. Suddenly, it turns into a more harmonious place when the need is gone. For it to fulfill you, it becomes quite a pleasant place.

And even that which is not pleasant at first sight in this world, you will be taken into situations sometimes that are manifestation of the dysfunctional mind-identified consciousness, and which perhaps contain a great amount of human pain, pain body. And your presence in those situations will be a decisive factor in bringing about a shift. And your consciousness there, you cannot imagine how important one realized point of consciousness is in any situation.

One point of consciousness who is no longer totally identified with forms and is no longer reactive to forms, but comes from the gentleness, the compassion, the love that is there when you are there as the formless presence I am. And there you sit or stand while conflict may be going on around you, and you just watch. You look upon it in the state of attention, no strain in it, relaxed, alert, attention.

Whether it be a conflict situation that is there happening next to you, or whether it be a conflict situation, a challenge that affects you directly, there's the ability to look. I'm using the word look here in a wider sense. We already encountered looking, how important it can be to look in the state of attention at a flower, a tree, or anything.

Here I'm using looking in a wider sense, which is embracing it with your attention, which

is a field of stillness. And there, that is the current of awareness, so to speak, that flows through you onto the situation, which may involve a person or several people. So that intelligence comes into play in that situation, the unmanifested intelligence, not reactive, not analytical, not trying to work out what can I do to change this situation, or even trying to work out what can I do to help these people.

A greater help comes when you enter that consciousness, and then suddenly, perhaps, words come, or suddenly action arises, not perhaps even from within you. It may come from somebody out there. You are the bringer of space, so to speak, space consciousness, the spaciousness of presence.

So it is an enormous thing to realize what power there lies in pure attention, looking, beyond just visual looking. Even a blind person can look in that sense, which is simply placing awareness, embracing it, one could say, with awareness, which implies allowing it to be as it is at this moment, because it already is. And that becomes the basis then for change.

So that's the most powerful thing in yourself, is to discover that still power that never fights anything or anybody, but embraces everything and everybody, and yet is also the most powerful agent of change, and also transforms the outer, so it becomes a more benign place, less hell. It approaches heaven a little bit more. Certain polarities will remain in the outer realm.

They keep the outer going, hot, cold, high, low, but they are benign polarities. They are to be enjoyed as the multiplicity of the phenomenal universe, to be enjoyed the multiple forms. So life can appear in so many forms.

So this is so simple, and this is perhaps why it's remained a secret for so long. Take this consciousness anywhere, and you immediately become a healer. And again, I'm using the word in a wider sense, that whatever enters that field of spacious presence becomes transformed, and if it is not ready to be transformed, will remove itself.

It's not ready yet, and that's fine too. People will come to you now as this is arising from within you more strongly. Many of you will find, and many of you are already finding, that people come to you, and they don't know why, and they ask a question.

You might meet people seemingly accidentally, maybe in an elevator or anywhere, and something that you say or they ask, there's something there. They are seeking something from you. Something within them can sense something, that there is something there.

They don't know what it is. So people will be drawn to you, and there's the temptation, there's the possibility that your mind will re-enter the stage and say, I've got to do something. It might say, I've got to help this person.

How can I help this person? That's a natural temptation to come when people come for help. To try to figure out how to help, and a far more effective help is available when you become comfortable with that state, the simple state of presence, in which it seems that you don't know anything.

There's simply a being there, simply a listening, an open field of attention. The person may be speaking, and there's an open field of attention. That is a very fine energy vibration.

That is intelligence. Out of that intelligence, whatever is needed comes through words, realizations, action, insights, sudden insights, or simply sometimes the arising of peace in the other person. And so that is the greatest transformative agent.

It's the frequency of awareness. And so the mind then takes secondary place, it steps back, and it becomes the servant, so to speak. Thought still operates sometimes.

When a realization comes, it may need to be expressed in words. So it becomes a thought, and that thought becomes the words. That's beautiful.

Then the mind works beautifully. It doesn't take over. It may try again, because it's been running the show for so long, and then it subsides.

You have to, because many of you live in, have one foot in the new consciousness, one foot in the old. It can still happen that mind takes over. It happens even to great spiritual teachers.

It can happen that the mind comes back and identification with me as special comes back. If for years, if for 10 years everybody tells me I'm special because they confuse the essence with the form, if for 10 years people tell me that I am special, then maybe if I don't meet, especially if I live in an ashram, never meet anybody else who doesn't tell me I'm special. Eventually, I am special.

I must be. Everybody's telling me. Enlightenment is nobody's possession or attainment.

It is simply there in the absence of the density of a mind-identified sense of self. In the absence of that density, the condition, the state of enlightenment is there. It's always been there even before.

The sun just shines through now. The sun could become obscured again because it's nobody's possession. Nobody says, I am in possession of a state of enlightenment now.

Who are you? It's in the absence of you that it's there. The absence of the mind made you.

So the mind may come in and want to run the show again and then at some point you will notice it. Oh, this may, this state of consciousness, it's important to, when you talk to

people, even in situations that involve, that are not problematic, casual conversation, even there, the mind can easily take over and you lose the spaciousness. In any human interaction, the decisive factor, the only real important question in any human interaction is, is there space?

Or is there complete, or is the entire interaction dominated by object consciousness? Which means, is the entire interaction dominated by the activity of thought? And you can see how you get drawn into that.

It's the mind, the mind stream taking over. No space left. It's full.

It's like living cramped in a room, cramped full with things. And then comes the next thing. And then the next, because when you're in a mind stream, one thing leads to the next.

One thought leads to the next. And there's no end. And some people, many people, even when they're alone, it happens to them.

And then they get exhausted after a while because it burns up so much energy that, and then they look for somebody else to talk to. And in any interaction, so you can observe, is there space or has space been lost now? Space can never really be lost, but there's complete unawareness of space, which means there's no awareness of awareness.

There's only awareness of things. There's only awareness of thoughts, but awareness has become the thought, identification with thought. Awareness has been born into thought forms.

Consciousness has taken birth and is taking birth continuously as thought forms, a continuous stream. Like, you know, when some life forms give birth in rapids, some fishes that come out of the, when I was a child, I had an aquarium and I could sometimes see a fish giving birth. The fish would just come out of the mother fish.

This is the universe giving birth to form. And this happens on the level of thought. The consciousness, the one consciousness giving birth to form is born into form, one after another.

Rebirth, rebirth, rebirth. And you are in each rebirth. There is me, complete identification with the form, the thought form.

That is rebirth. That is you're condemned to be reborn. It's not some abstract Buddhist theory, rebirth.

Rebirth is a concrete thing happening at this moment into the next thought form and the next. And the end of rebirth is not some abstract Buddhist notion that says you need another 200 incarnations approximately to come to the end of rebirth. Rebirth.

The end of rebirth is, the possibility for that is here and now. Not to be reborn into the next thought. And then, suddenly, space is there.

A little bit of space around the thought. Watch people interacting, or even better, watch yourself interacting and see, are you there as a thought form, perhaps wedded to an emotion that goes with it, particularly if you're trying to be right, or reacting to something the person said, or reacting to a place or situation. And so, how much space is there in you?

Any? Even that question can be helpful, because that question is a little pointer. The question, of course, is still a thought, but it's pointing beyond itself.

How much space is there? Is there any space in me at this moment? And when you ask that question, you come to the end of thought, because to know whether there's any space in you, which is the space of awareness, which is the space of no thought, that very question, is there any space in me at this moment, that question, in order to answer it, you need to listen, watch, and be alert and attentive to find out whether there's any space in you, and that is the space. That's why the question can take you there. To answer it, the space needs to be there.

Is there any space in me? This is a similar question to the question we asked yesterday. Is it still now?

Now, these are beautiful questions, because to answer them, you can't think to answer them. There's no answer in thought. If there's an answer in thought, it's a mistake, it's wrong.

If you give that answer to a Zen master, he'll hit you. So, that's a beautiful little thing that in any interaction, if you simply remember that question, and then you will notice stopping for a moment, because you have to find out. And so, you can learn to interact noticing the mind stream, you will notice it more often when you're being dragged along in a mind stream, and then you're out.

Spaciousness is there. And it's good if you can, when you speak to people, one can be aware that you've said what you had to say, the mind's statement has come to an end, and then you can step back into spaciousness from there. That's a beautiful thing to do.

You've said, you've given your opinion. What do you think of such and such? Well, what do you think of political situation?

Well, I think it's like this, like that. I think he's right. I think he's wrong.

I think he's great. I think he's mad. There's the mental position.

And you've said it, and then you step back into spaciousness. Okay, you've said what

you had to say. You can still have mental positions.

Your sense of self is in the space, not in the mental position. And then if he says, I disagree with you totally, he's not mad, he's doing the right thing. That's another viewpoint.

You can still defend yours. You can say, I still think you're wrong because this and this and this, without the self defending itself. And then you're already creating an enemy there.

The person who's disagreeing with you becomes your enemy because he's attacking your sense of self. That is madness. It's very normal.

And it's mad. So you can play around with mental positions. You don't need to give them up.

You may have favorite positions. I'm a Republican. I'm a Democrat.

Why not? Or whatever. It's fine.

And your position maybe is more right than somebody else's. Who knows? It may well be.

History will show that either he's mad or he's doing the right thing. So not to become trapped in in mind forms. Because you are part of the madness.

Even if you say that he's mad, and you get mad because somebody else disagrees with your viewpoint, you're part of the madness. Anybody in whom space consciousness is not arising is really part of the problem. And then you see certain things, of course, from space consciousness inside.

So there you can see quite deeply into things. And there's compassion in the seeing. Even if you see somebody's doing a mad thing, there's compassion in there, in that.

And again, compassion is not weak. Compassion is an aspect of the unconditioned. It arises out of that.

I suggest between now and the next our afternoon meeting, we keep noble silence. Perhaps even beyond, we'll see. Between now and this afternoon, a space of silence in which you are alone with your mind.

And be compassionate with your mind. Accept it. Be aware of all the many little things as you walk, walking around, and aware of the field in which this is arising, which is you.

Thank you. I suggest we spend the rest of the day in noble silence, except perhaps for this body sitting on a chair this afternoon. Words may come.

Some of you may be watching a film tonight, and there's no reason why you cannot be silent as you watch the film. Fierce, I believe it is tonight, Fierce Grace, about the life of Ram Dass. A good film.

And so if you can, extend the silence into sleep, until sleep happens tonight. For those of you who have come with a partner or friend, it would be good occasionally also to walk alone out here in nature, in silence. And awareness.

That's why it's called noble silence. There's silence and noble silence. Silence means you're not speaking.

Noble silence means you're not speaking and aware. The expression, I believe, originally comes from Buddha, the Buddha, or Buddhism. About many subjects it is said, when asked, the Buddha kept noble silence, which means he didn't give you an answer.

That reminds me that probably tomorrow morning we'll have a question and answer session. Questions, perhaps answers. This morning, I believe there was a CD played of meditation music, and if you still have it, if we could listen as a musical illustration of this morning's, what we were talking about this morning, this morning's talk.

I'd like you to just listen for two or three minutes to that little piece. And what to listen to, mainly, predominantly, is not the sounds or the tones, not the foreground, but the background. The background of space.

The background of stillness. And with music like that, even the act of listening to that, because it is the act of listening to an absence, the absence of sound. Listening to stillness brings about inner stillness.

It's only with that that you can acknowledge the dimension of silence. External silence. Only with the inner dimension of stillness, which is consciousness without thought.

That's what stillness is. Consciousness without thought. Only from that dimension can you be aware of silence, what seems like external silence.

That's why that, I mentioned perhaps briefly on our first day, whenever that was, perhaps yesterday, how listening to silence out in nature or in a room can also be an opening into that dimension. Because you cannot listen, acknowledge silence, notice silence, without the dimension of stillness. Thinking cannot even notice silence.

It's a little mystery, and it's a miracle. The simple act of noticing that dimension puts you into that dimension. Otherwise you can't notice that.

So listening to this music, we are aware of the background more than what happens. One could say the canvas on which the sound is painted. And as you do that, that pure awareness, that consciousness without thought arises.

So if we have that CD, if we could listen to track two of this morning's meditation CD. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you. But the background is more important than what happens. The only way the dimension of the sacred can come into this world is through the awareness of the background, which is awareness of awareness, space, inner space.

We said this morning, in any interaction, ask yourself whether there is space. In the interaction, the very question makes it possible for space to open up. This is really no different from asking whether there's love in the interaction.

Because out of that, love arises. The awareness of that is love. I don't use that word too often because it's been misused a lot.

So to see, this is the essence of our retreat, the essence of any spiritual teaching, to see this, to realize this truth that is so simple is one thing, no thing. That's what, that realization, they call satori in Zen, when you for the first time see. And another thing is to live it in your daily life.

The ability to live it could be called enlightenment. And again, it's not that helpful a concept because it sounds like an achievement, somebody's achievement. And one could almost say that the essence of enlightenment is the opposite of somebody's achievement.

Enlightenment, and perhaps some of you may have come here expecting to gain something, it's not a gain of anything, since it's already here. It would be closer to the truth to say that enlightenment is a loss of something, of that which covers it up. So it cannot be an achievement.

So the question is then how to live it in one's daily life, where the challenges pile up one after the other, living in this world, not to some extent, faced with the challenges of everyday life, which are primarily in oneself. They seem to appear as external factors. But your real challenge is the conditioned mind, the momentum of it.

And your real challenge is not to lose awareness when that starts up, not to lose awareness when the pain body becomes active and associates itself with the thinking mind. Old emotion, old human emotion, old human pain linking in with the activity of thought, personalizing the pain. The pain body says, don't talk about me, I can't stand it.

So there's thousands of years of conditioning, collective mental conditioning, plus your personal conditioning from this lifetime, which is bad enough in itself, and the personal pain from this lifetime, which will be quite enough. And so what to be aware of in your daily life is, of course, the movement of thought and the reflex of emotions. Aware means, know that it's there, so that there's a space around it.

One could say a space between you, which is a space between you and the thought, the space between you and the emotion. But ultimately, you are the space. So then the emotion happens within the space that you are.

Know yourself as space, not as that which happens in that space. This is why this music is helpful. Know yourself as the underlying field, not that which takes birth and then dies in the field, comes and goes.

So it means not getting, not believing in every label that the mind comes up with. That's why it's so important to begin to live in such a way that your life is not, that the aliveness of life is not obscured continuously by labels and concepts. That's why it's so important to go for a walk here and perceive clearly, aware in this place of awareness, without needing the labels.

Why it's so important to sometimes do small things, little movements, conventional little activities, and bring presence to them, a space. They happen within the spaciousness of no thought, just aware presence. Even a simple thing as putting an object from here to there.

While it travels from here to there, there's a space of pure awareness. So it's a beautiful gesture. It becomes beautiful through that.

Before it wasn't beautiful, it was a means to an end. I need to put this here. It doesn't have that quality to it that comes only with awareness.

Walking across your room consciously from the door to the bed, being free from thought for that little interval. It's just beautiful. So this is the beginning of not getting completely drawn into labels and believing that when you have a label you know what it is.

Living in that state of openness, which is true intelligence, which has the appearance that you don't know, and yet all knowing arises out of it. All true knowing. So here we have, this is the beginning, little labels, not to believe in the ultimate reality of the labels.

And then of course there's more, the human mind. There are huge patterns of ways in which you interpret the universe, inherited from your personal past, inherited from the collective past, your cultural past, the collective past of mankind, of humankind. Ways of interpretation which are based mainly on separative egoic consciousness.

The little me interprets the world in certain ways. And no longer totally believe in one's interpretation of situations, events, or people. And beware of premature conclusions, which the mind quickly reaches about things and people.

That's how it is. So beware of all interpretations of people or events and recognize them when they come, because they come, recognize them as interpretations, as a perspective, perhaps a possible perspective. Never the entire truth and very often a

complete fantasy.

So it's always a standing back from thought into the spaciousness, being the spaciousness. There's the interpretation and then you stand back a little bit. There are many stories in Zen to illustrate how interpretations can mislead you.

I will tell you a little one. It was for a long time the custom in monasteries when visitors arrived in the evening to ask for lodging, sometimes other monks or other visitors, in order to gain the right to spend the night in the monastery. They'd have to challenge somebody who lives in the monastery to an argument and win the argument.

But it was a Zen argument, so it was never conducted with many words. And if they won, they could spend the night. If they lost, they would have to move on.

So there was one monastery where the abbot was a monk and his younger brother, who was not yet very enlightened, also lived there as a monk. The younger brother only had one eye. He had lost his eye early in childhood.

So one evening the younger brother came to the abbot and said, a visitor has just arrived and I happen to be standing at the gates and he challenged me to an argument, a discussion about what do I do. He had never done it and the abbot, his elder brother, knew that that was a risky thing. So he said, but he had been challenged, so he said, okay, conduct the argument in silence.

Okay, he went off. Ten minutes later, the visitor comes and knocks at the door of the abbot and says, I'd like to pay my respects to you and take my leave because your brother is so clever and enlightened, he completely defeated me in the argument. And the abbot said, also what happened?

He said, well, it started, our discussion started, said the visitor, with me raising one finger to signify Buddha, the enlightened one. Then your brother raised two fingers to signify Buddha, the enlightened one, is not complete without the dharma, the Buddha's teaching. Then I raised three fingers to indicate that the third element is also needed, which is the sangha, the brotherhood of monks, without which it's not complete.

So here they went. And then the visitor said, your brother suddenly shook his fist in my face to signify that all arises from the one act of enlightenment, the one realization. And so he completely defeated me.

I'll move on to another monastery and seek lodging there. Goodbye. And a few minutes later, the younger brother comes in and says to the abbot, where is this fellow?

I'm going to beat him up. He completely insulted me. And the abbot says, tell me what happened.

He said, well, we started, he raised one finger to say, to make fun of my own one eye. Then I decided to raise two fingers to compliment him on the fact that he had two eyes. And then he dared to raise three fingers to show that even between us, we only had three eyes.

And so I was going to punch him in the face, but he ran away. Different realities, different worlds. And so, beautiful example.

This, of course, was the conditioning of the brother. And probably, how did he get the, as a child, he was mocked many times. So there was already expecting something like that to happen.

And immediately, a neutral event was interpreted. So basically, and this happens to many people still in this world, they inhabit a fantasy world of conditioning from the past and looking at events that are happening in the present through that conditioning and interpreting events through that conditioning. And in many cases, it's complete fantasy.

But the strange thing is, when you continuously interpret the world in certain ways, it tends to reflect back to you that interpretation. So one could say that what is called karma, usually it's regarded as things that happen to you in your life. Good things, bad things, good karma, good karma, bad karma.

But really, how your life unfolds is perhaps 10% of what happens to you and 90% of the reactions to what happens to you. And the continuous reactions create their own reality. Reality confirms back to you that your interpretation is correct.

That's how it works. So if you interpret human beings as being basically dishonest and out to get you or get something from you, that becomes your selective perception of reality. That's the way in which you interpret events.

And then after a while, because perception is selective, you will get confirmation because you will only meet those people after a while that all conform to your expectations, the others you're not even interested in. And you might even bring out in people who are not totally conscious yet, that which you expect from them or that which you fear from them. You pull it out of them if they're not fully conscious.

So to be aware very much of the way in which one interprets reality. That's why this, I like this, Byron Katie, a spiritual teacher, has this question that you ask yourself whenever you have thoughts arising about a person, a situation, an event, and you have your interpretation of it. Do I really know that this is true?

Can I really know that this is true? And then you look deeply and say, I don't really know if this interpretation is true. I don't really know it.

Maybe it looks true to me, but I don't really know it. And so you're beginning to take a

step back from thought, any thought, so that you can begin to dwell in the region of no thought and have your home, your dwelling place there, not in the interpretations of the mind. Have your dwelling place in that field, in that pure intelligence.

And out of there, yes, you respond to situations and events, but you don't react. React comes out of the old conditioning. So people carry inside them the past.

They look upon the present through the eyes of the past. And so what then happens is that that provides the continuity between past and future. You make sure that the future is going to be the same as the past.

And this is how most people live, and this is the essence of karma, is that there is a continuity between the unconscious past in you and the events that unfold. You are creating it through your interpretations and total identification with the thought structures, which then create that reality. Nations do it to each other.

Collective bodies, entities interpret it in their way. Cannot see any other perspective except that. There is no other perspective.

This is the truth. As I mentioned to the writer that I read in the New York Times, competing narrative, the unwillingness or the inability to accommodate a competing narrative, to see that, and to hold that in awareness. So to see inside oneself the structure of thought and the movement of old emotion that goes with it, and step back from it so that there's some space.

And that applies particularly, of course, when the movement of thought becomes connected to the old emotion, and they become a vicious circle. The old pain body, the old emotion, personal emotions from your past, collective pain from humanity as a whole, with which even every baby comes into this world. Most babies already cry.

Why do they already cry? There's already pain there. Some babies cry more than others.

Some babies have a heavier pain body than others. It doesn't mean those who don't have a heavy pain body are closer to liberation. Maybe the other way around.

Who knows? But that is there. And that pain body is an aspect of the mind-made self.

And it is that which makes it hard to step beyond it. If it were only thought structures, it wouldn't be that hard. But it is thought structures combined with a force of old human pain.

So when the pain body that lives in every human, not always active, sometimes dormant for periods of time, when it needs to replenish itself, which it can only do by absorbing energy frequency that corresponds to its own vibrational frequency, which is the frequency of pain in whatever form, oh, ah, whatever it is, this explains it better than

concepts. Concepts create a distance, okay, anger, ah, or heaviness of depression. Can't, can't take any more, can't take any more of this.

So when the pain body needs to replenish itself, it can only do that by creating energy that vibrates at the same frequency, which is pain. And so it will move into your mind, the emotion rises up into the mind, thinking, and then suddenly your thinking reflects the emotion. You think along the lines of the emotion.

So if the predominant energy field of the emotion is anger, you think angry thoughts about, of course, it'll be about something here, the situation, somebody next to you, the situation you're in right now. It seems to be caused, the thoughts that you're thinking with great energy seem to be caused by something around you. But of course, that which is around you very often is a relatively insignificant event or thing that somebody did or said, but the emotion, the thoughts and the emotions are extremely powerful, extreme, have incredible force to them, out of proportion to the event, which was really only the triggering event, not the causal event.

But the mind made self believes it to be the causal event. You caused this, you did that to me. And not surprisingly, a very, very common characteristic of the self linked with pain body is to see itself as a victim of some personal situation, very common, almost every pain body has it, the interpretation of reality as doing something to me, because in miracles puts it beautifully, it says, beware of the temptation of seeing yourself unfairly treated.

And that is almost in everyone, that is an aspect of pain body and the self, mind made self, when it links in with pain body. Something there is doing something to, even the criminals in prison, almost all of them consider themselves to be victims. In some ways, one could say they are, it's a perspective.

You can take any perspective. So let's see, when the pain body needs to feed, there's a readiness for it to come. It cannot yet come unless it can find some trigger.

The trigger could be just one thought that goes through your head. That's the slightest trigger it can use. One, a little negative thought, a little negative reaction, then the pain body can use that and link into that.

And that would lead to a stream of thinking along the lines of the pain body. So just a little even driving in the traffic, an upset about another driver, oh, this, when the pain body is ready to come up, it'll use that moment and that will lead to a train of thought movement that is increasingly painful. And the pain body loves it.

It feeds on every painful thought because the thought carries the vibration that it wants. It's all suddenly seen through those eyes of pain. And so from one little traffic incident, suddenly the whole universe is, and yourself, and the pain body is feeding on the

movement of thought.

And then that is the movement of unconsciousness. Is there a possibility at that point to wake up? Yes, now there is.

If there is enough presence in you, there is the possibility of knowing what is happening as it happens. If you can catch it at an early stage, it's even easier. Just as it arises, catch it to see, to feel the emotion directly before it becomes a thought.

If you can do that, it cannot begin to use your thought processes. If your awareness is there, and that requires alertness, that requires that, if the alertness is there, you can watch the emotion wanting to become a thought. And you continue simply to watch it on the level of the emotion, semi-physical entity.

Beautiful. It's no longer a personal matter. It's simply the movement of emotion in you.

And when you watch it, it is implied that you accept it because it's here. It's part of your acceptance practice, which is the most powerful way to go beyond is to accept what's there. There it is.

If you don't catch it at a very early stage, you may have to catch it already when thought is already moving. And then you may notice a strong disinclination, if that's a word, to want to get out of it. There may still be a presence in the background, a witnessing presence.

How strong it is, then, that will determine whether or not you can still rise above it, step out of it, see it for what it is. Ah, pain body. And feel it.

Oh. And then it's not replenishing itself through your thinking. Of course, as I'm sure many of you know, it also likes to replenish itself through other people, to provoke a reaction, to challenge somebody else.

Please give me some emotional reaction. React. You did that to me.

I didn't. You did it to me. So it feeds on the other person's.

It wants to awaken the other person's pain body. Pain bodies love other pain bodies. So partners feed on each other's pain body.

It's an essential ingredient of most relationships. The drama that is a necessary part of relationships, periodic drama. And after a while, the pain body has replenished itself and it subsides.

And then the same cycle starts again. And so to bring consciousness into that requires alertness, vigilance. You cannot suppress it.

It would only get stronger. For temporarily you could. I'm not going to let this pain body get the better of me.

I'm just going to sit here. Not acknowledging what the mind may call negative emotions is also dangerous. The minds might be saying, you may have an image, if you're still deriving your sense of self from thought, you may have an image in your mind of who you are, a spiritual person.

Maybe. Someone who has already gone beyond these things. Or if you're a Christian and want to follow the teaching of Jesus without having gone to the bottom of it, just the externals, then you may have an image of yourself as a good Christian.

A good Christian, there are certain things that a good Christian does not feel to be a good. And so there may be a clash between the emotion that you feel and your self-image. And then you deny that it's there.

I'm not angry at all. How dare you even suggest that I'm angry? Can go so far as to somebody shouting, I am not angry.

So to watch that, because people believe that the emotions that they experience are some personal dilemma. That they are not yet advanced enough, so that's why they're still there. Or not good enough people to have those emotions.

I'm not good enough if I have those emotions. Hmm. It's the belief that emotions are a personal matter.

Deriving your sense of self partly from emotions and partly from thought. That's the mind-made self consists of those elements. And so there is nothing personal neither in emotion nor in thought.

It's just human thought. No different from other human thought. Another human next to you has very similar thought structures.

And emotions. Anger is anger in the other person. It's very similar to your anger.

Basically the same. The stories around it may be slightly different. The explanations of why I'm angry may be slightly different from person to person.

Slightly different script in the head. But so what people derive their identity from, the sense of person, personal selfhood, is ultimately not personal at all. It is human emotion and human thinking.

And that makes it a little easier when you realize that your emotions are not personal matter. They're human emotions to do with the fact that you are a human, temporarily a human, here on this planet, have inherited certain things that are connected with the past of this planet. And those things are there.

That's all. So you can, by watching an emotion, you begin to depersonalize the emotion. Not denying, but depersonalizing it.

So it is not a personal problem of yours anymore, the fact that you get anger attacks once a week or whatever the pain body, whatever form the pain body may take. Then you can actually see that as the fiery emotion of that. It's easier to accept it too, when you realize it as not self, as not you.

It's easier to accept that, yes, there are still human emotions in you. Oh, how dreadful. So with that begins a depersonalization of pain body.

The pain body wants to pretend to be a person. It wants to take me very seriously. It wants to be linked to the story of me.

It gives energy to the story, which then becomes a very unhappy story when the pain body is there. So, and even to see that the story also of me, which consists of thought and reactive patterns, thoughts, reactive patterns, memories, mental images, are thought forms. That's concepts, thought forms, and images that happen in the field of consciousness.

And again, you would be surprised how similar the basic structure of human thought is from person to person. When you get to the bottom of it in yourself, you know every other mind. Even from other cultures, or in other cultures, the story may be different, but the basic elements are the same of totally identifying with one mental position.

If you're a woman and you travel to certain countries and forget to change your clothes, and you arrive at the airport wearing a and short sleeved blouse, then certain people in those countries will immediately interpret you as immoral, has no shame, is immoral, and that is their perspective. When they come here, you might have some other interpretation about them. And they cannot step yet, they cannot yet step beyond it and see it as one, as an interpretation, as a perspective.

They're still completely wedded to that mind form, that mind structure. And anybody who challenges it, challenges their very identity. That's the essence of unconsciousness.

So it's not, so your self is not in thought and emotion, it is in the space in which the thoughts and emotions happen. The one who can allow the thoughts and emotions to be there, which is the space, which is the I am presence, the deepest I amness. I am is usually followed by some concept or word, this or that, or a name, just a thought form.

The most frequently used word in the language may be I, and usually it refers to the mind made me and its emotions, which is the story. And when people tell you about I, they tell you about their story. But the deeper meaning of I, I is both the greatest illusion, the word that contains the greatest illusion, and the word that contains the deepest truth in language, the deepest essence.

Usually when I is used, it is the illusion, the illusory entity. But potentially, I is the deepest statement of who you are. I am, pure, aware presence of beingness.

And you can only know that when thought comes to an end. What is left, let's say you don't even remember your name anymore, or the stories from your past at this moment. You can't remember my name or the stories from my past.

What is left, is there anything essential that you have lost? No. In the absence of the memory of your story or your name, the deepest sense of beingness is still there, which before got mixed up in the stories that you were telling yourself and others.

This is the amazing thing that that remains, and it remains in its essence. Oh, and that is so precious, and so beautiful. And that's you, I.

It is the divine in you. It is formless. And that's why in the the most profound statement in the Bible is God's self-definition.

Who are you? And God says, I am that I am. The essence of I am is that.

And sometimes it comes to people who through some apparent accident, accidentally, lose everything that they thought they were. Life takes it away from them, strips you of all the things that you've been hanging on to. That works too.

Or here. It works in many different ways. This, in some places they may not come to teachings like this.

Somebody may lose, become a refugee, lose their homes. Loss does it sometimes. So this is emerging now on a larger scale for the first time on the planet.

Thousands of years ago, that realization came to one human being. The first flowering of human consciousness. The first realization, who I am beyond form.

And it is quite possible that that person was a person whose existence on this planet goes back into the legendary past. We know even less about him than we know about Jesus or Buddha. And there's the legend in India of Krishna.

And Krishna may well have been the first human to have realized that dimension within. And over time, now the amazing thing is that some humans recognized something in him. They recognized something of themselves in him, but didn't fully know that that was what was happening.

That they recognized something of themselves. A purer version, an undiluted version of themselves. An unobscured version of themselves.

And over time they associated the formless consciousness that was emerging with the form of the person. And so the person became a kind of God in people's eyes, in people's

thoughts. But of course, that realization is the emergence of the formless.

It is not of a person, of a form. It does not belong to any form. It comes when the form becomes somehow transparent.

It's no longer obscured by the density of mental and emotional structures. And so that was perhaps the first flowering. And then came others here and there.

And gradually the possibility of this happening, this realization, could not come on this planet until now for the simple reason that the need for it was not there yet. They were preparations, one could say, almost for the shift in consciousness. The early flowerings.

Prototypes. Exactly the same happened, as I mentioned before, when flowers first appeared on the planet. Millions of years of plant life without flowers.

And one day, one plant developed a flower, which is, one could say, another dimension of plant life. Thousands of years later, another flower. Thousand years later, two flowers.

Until finally, suddenly a profusion of flowers all over the planet. Our human evolutionary stage, the way humans, where we are now, is coming to an end. The cycle of thought.

Not that thought will not operate anymore, but humans are going beyond having to rely predominantly on thought. They're going beyond needing to derive their identity from thought. And this is a momentous event.

Why is it happening now? For the simple reason that it has to happen now. Because the old consciousness is becoming increasingly dysfunctional, which is normal at the end of an evolutionary cycle.

Things don't work anymore. And so, even that is fine. Even the madness that we witness on the planet now, and have witnessed in past centuries, even the madness is good, is ultimately part of what is meant to be.

Ultimately. And part of it is also recognizing madness as madness. Recognizing dysfunction as dysfunction is equally important.

So let this, this is an event that goes far beyond this room. Because on the surface of things, not much is happening here. A person speaking, some people are listening.

And yet, it is part already of the transformation of human consciousness on the planet. Not significant enough, it is not what fit into the news, usually, although it can happen, it's happened, but it's rare. It's not, to a large extent, not yet a newsworthy event, although once this teaching was on the national news in Canada.

But it's rare, and they only gave it two and a half minutes. But it's a beginning. So don't believe entirely, don't believe that what you hear or see on television is the entire truth,

and is the complete news of what's happening on this planet.

There's a lot happening that is not being mentioned on the news. And what is not being mentioned on the news is more significant than that which is mentioned. Beware of being drawn into reactivity when you watch events happening in the world.

Either into fear, or into anger, or into despair could happen. When you watch the news on television, be there as a witnessing presence. Compassionate, that comes naturally with the witnessing presence.

Be there, alert, just as you watch the tree or the flower, you can watch the news. Or just as you sit with a person who is in pain and talking to you, you can watch the news in that way. Let it happen within a field of peace.

Who is going to bring peace to this world if not you? And if enough people watch the news within a field of peace, even the news will change. It's all happening in consciousness.

The collective dream of humanity is changing. The collective nightmare is changing. We are waking up out of the collective nightmare.

To some extent you could say that all of phenomenal existence is a kind of dream, but it becomes a more beautiful dream. Be careful with the seductive quality of television, how it draws you out of the body if you watch for long, your attention, how it puts you into a semi-hypnotic state, how a particular world view is being continuously played out, although occasionally something else is coming in these days, not often yet. If you have to watch, it's very helpful to be in the body, to feel the inner energy field of body, so that you have an anchor that keeps you present, and you watch from there.

Something else that pulls your attention out is computer screens, staring at it for long periods. Again, it helps to connect with the inner body, and at times look away and feel the inner body. Maybe have a flower next to your computer or plant, something natural.

If you find it still difficult to perceive without thought, which is what I'm here talking about, connect with the inner body, even if it's only one part of the body, and feel the aliveness within that part, and then look. Then it is easier to perceive without thought. At the same time, even at this moment, you can look, see this room, and at the same time feel the aliveness within.

That's a beautiful way of getting to know what it means to perceive without thought, simply in awareness. Television, for many people, is almost liberating, and it's a drug. It liberates them from their own mind, because when you watch television, for long periods, you are not thinking your own thoughts.

Sometimes you are, but a lot of the time when you watch, you're simply linking into the

collective mind. You're forced to think their thoughts. So it's not that you become free of mind, you become free of the personal aspect, your mind, your problems, but then what you watch is somebody else's problems.

Well, that's a little liberation, at least it's not your problems. Very important, as this shift happens, there are already children coming into this world who are more ready for the shift in consciousness than you and I ever were when we came into this world. I wasn't ready.

A lot of suffering had to happen before the readiness, but many children are already coming into this world now, and they are coming, of course, still into this culture, which is ignorant of such matters, no longer totally ignorant, because this is becoming almost mainstream now, so it is spreading, but the structures of society, the school system, and so on, still to a large extent ignorant. The structures are heavy, they're in place even if some of the teachers become enlightened, they still have to work within the structures of the unenlightened consciousness. That is not easy.

So there are humans within the old institutions, and this applies to quite a few of you perhaps, there are human beings who are already going through this transformation, but they are still working within the old structures, and only you can know for yourself, by becoming still, whether to continue working from within those structures and perhaps bring about a transformation of the structures from within, simply by being who you are, your consciousness, by being conscious within the unconscious structures.

Or it may be that you might find that those structures are so rigid that you see little possibility, and then you will know what to do. You may remove yourself, not through decision making, but through waking up one morning and saying, that's it, it could happen. Or you may transform them from within, as in some cases that may be possible.

There's no general truth here, only you can know what the truth is in your particular case. There are the economic structures, there are the corporations, we've heard a lot about them recently, the big corporations, how they operate, are they all evil, all the big managers, are they evil? No, they are egoic entities like everybody else, just a little bigger because of their position.

Educational, social structures, all those, political, so some may collapse and some may become transformed from within. Nobody can predict how it is going to happen. Do not leave prematurely, just see.

You will know what is right, and if you have to leave, life will look after you, and this is the truth. If you have to starve, and you won't, if you have to starve, you will starve beautifully. And then other children, who are some of them, have to be in those old structures, and they may not function very well within them.

So, if you come into contact, either as a parent, or in some other way, with children, the greatest gift you can give is the gift of space. They're just waiting for it, they'll recognize it very easily. They're waiting for you to give the gift of space, and then you give it to each other.

Before you know it, they may be teaching you, it's all one anyway. So, the greatest gift is the gift of space, and even those children who are still burdened, so it seems, with the old consciousness, strongly identified with the old consciousness, the gift of space is what they also long for deep within. And in families, the absence of space is the worst aspect of family life in our civilization.

The one thing that matters isn't there, and all the entire family is run by the thinking mind, object consciousness, one damn thing after another. Never, they don't have meals together anymore, they just, and even if they had meals together, there might not be space. You know what Thanksgiving dinners are like in families.

So, it's to provide that in your family, especially if they're children, be there as space, not be consumed by object consciousness, not be consumed by things that need to be done, that pretend to be important. Nothing is more important than this. And so, this begins with a little thing like the ability to listen to their child, no matter what the child is talking about, just listen.

The pure, the act of pure listening is the greatest thing, the act of pure listening is pure awareness. Pure listening is the most beautiful thing you can share with another human being. Even if they are talking coming from the noisy mind, it is being received within the spaciousness of pure listening.

The most powerful thing. Anybody who can listen becomes an effective healer. Anybody who can listen from that space, as that space, if you then put up a little sign and say psychotherapist, and your only qualification is that you can listen, you would do very well by word of mouth.

You might not get insurance though. And all effective psychotherapists know that they become only effective when they enter that state. Some of them do after many years of practice.

Simply they get bored with anything else, with applying their particular thought system to the patient. Applying their beliefs as their grid of interpretation, labels, and then after 10 or 20 years they get tired of the labels. And then they just sit there and listen.

And then they find amazing things sometimes come out of their mouth. And at other times amazing things come out of the person's mouth who is sitting with you. It's all part of not relying anymore on accumulated knowledge.

It's still there for little things, yes, it's good. But not relying on that. So let's live this now,

starting right now.

Starting as you move away from this room, walking towards your room, one step at a time. Observing the movement of thought that may be there, and perhaps the spaciousness being there as you watch nature around you. If you watch the film tonight, it's about a deepening brought about through some pain that happens through suffering.

Ram Dass suffered a stroke and experienced an enormous deepening through that. So grace, the meaning of the title Fierce Grace is that grace sometimes comes in that form. It takes something away from you.

For example, your ability to move about. And then grace comes in a different form, like this. A moment of silence.

Thank you. The weather, the weather is now ideal for retreat. Our practice for the rest of this week, and this sentence already contains a paradox, our practice for the rest of this week is to stay with just this moment.

And that is the paradox that on the surface of things, time seems to be very real. Within the depths of yourself, time ceases to be real. So you always have, when one speaks of the timeless dimension of consciousness, you're using language which is derived from the world of time.

Paradox comes in. The practice then is to just stay just with this little moment. Just this one.

And it's always this one. When you're walking out there, stripping one step at a time, being in the state of yes to this moment. That is really all.

Now the yes to so-called beautiful, sunny, warm weather may be a little easier than the yes to cold, wet, windy weather. And you can extend that as almost a metaphor to the rest of your life. The strange thing is, however, that the yes to the cold, wet, and windy weather takes you even deeper than the yes to the good weather.

And the deepest is the yes to death. That takes you deepest. And death is any kind of death.

It's physical or psychological or some loss of something that was important to the me. Something dies. Part of your identity dies.

And then the yes takes you very deep. The yes to what is. So the space opens up immediately with the yes to what is.

The space that is beyond mind objects, thought. The thought, the mind, the mind made self, wants this to be more difficult. It would prefer to have an outline of what I am supposed to do for the next 10 years that finally will get me to a space consciousness.

It would be very happy if I gave you a folder describing the steps to take. And because it's very happy with being given additional time, future, it lives on that. And so it is not happy when it hears how simple the transformation of consciousness can be.

It's not happy that it doesn't require time. You mean I'm already enough? Can't be.

Not me. I'm not ready. I have a long way to go.

Surely there's so much that I don't know yet. And I still have to learn. I've only read 100 spiritual books.

There are so many experiences I haven't had yet. The fireworks that they talk about. Well, that may be a nice experience, but it doesn't last that long.

And then you are a little me again saying you can be a little me with the added thought form that once fireworks happened to me. And then you can live on the dilemma of how to get the fireworks back. So the need for more that is built into the structure of the human mind is also here, of course.

But of course, realization of who you are is not a more. And that includes more knowing, knowledge, or more understanding, which is not necessary. That's almost insulting to the mind.

You mean there's nothing for me to do, says the mind? If I may quote the philosopher Woody Allen, who said, I'm always astounded by people who want to understand the universe when it's hard enough to find your way around Chinatown. A sneeze can sometimes be satori.

So the yes to just this, just this moment. Space opens up within, spaciousness, and miraculously you become truly intelligent. I believe it was Krishnamurti who used the expression, the awakening of intelligence.

And that's what it is. There's more to intelligence than the mind can conceive. The mind being only a tiny aspect of the one intelligence, the human mind.

Fine, beautiful too, except when you seek the totality in it, when you seek yourself in it, when it becomes all there is, you get trapped in a tiny aspect of the totality. And that's a little delusion. When you're no longer trapped in it, the human mind is beautiful too.

So the practice here is not going beyond what is now. With the yes comes space. With the space comes, and I use that word reluctantly, with the space comes love.

Not the clinging and wanting love of the egoic self. A deeper love, the state of love that's inseparable from your essential beingness. You love what is.

And in loving what is, the universe actually becomes transformed. The universe is not

separate from what appears in your consciousness. All the forms that appear in your consciousness make up the universe.

And when there's love, that which appears in your consciousness becomes transformed. That is the universe. And that only works if you do not differentiate between good and bad in your love.

Those teachings have been there for a while. Somebody else said it in different words 2,000 years ago. It only works if you don't differentiate between good and bad.

How do you not differentiate between good and bad? The mind, the thinking mind operates on the principle of good and bad. It discriminates.

We could call it, because that is its essential characteristic, the discriminating mind. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The discriminating mind.

Becoming trapped in the discriminating mind. And this is why it's so essential to bring the yes to what is. An unconditional yes, because it is.

The mind, the thinking mind cannot love what is. It might love what it judges as desirable. And it will reject, try to get away from, or hate that which it judges as undesirable.

Not helpful. Judged as no good. That's what the thinking mind does.

It's its job to judge. So you cannot change the thinking mind in that sentence saying, I don't want to judge anymore. They've tried it.

Because humans heard 2,000 years ago, judge not your neighbor, love thy neighbor as thyself. And then they tried not to judge. Never saw that the prerequisite for not judging is to step out of the mind.

It's only from the dimension of space consciousness that there can be the state of no judgment. The moment a thought comes in, you've judged something. Thought can be equated with judgment.

And there's nothing wrong with that. That's what thought does. And on its own level, it has a certain helpful function if you don't get lost in it.

So love arises the moment there is space. We could almost equate those two, space. Love is space.

And it's the only way in which the world can become transformed. It transforms the world from within because the world is an inner phenomenon. An enormous intelligence begins to operate with a yes when space arises.

So that's the destiny of humanity is to be every, what appears to be the individual human being, to be an opening for space. One could almost say that all the history of humanity up till now was the prehistory of humanity. We're not quite human yet.

I don't know if there will be any history after this. There may be, but it won't be very important as history. So you look upon whatever you look upon with love.

And you love your neighbor as yourself. Your neighbor is whoever comes into your field of consciousness, of course. And this is essential practice now when facing another human being.

I mentioned it briefly yesterday. Is there space, just a little bit of space? A little space of no thought as your attention is there on another human being.

A space of the openness of no thought. Not length, doesn't matter. The space, just open.

The mind comes in and again, a stepping back from mind. Ideally, it's there whenever you listen to anybody. Then it may be that when you begin to speak, you might lose it initially because it's a new way of living.

And so it's easy for the mind to draw you back into the stream of thinking. And if you then remember to step back from thought once you have uttered what you have to say, you step back again into space and you listen. And after a while, you can even sense spaciousness in the background as you speak.

Another way of saying it, you can sense yourself, your essential beingness in the background as you speak, the I am. This is probably what a very early spiritual teacher, as far as the Western world is concerned, a contemporary spiritual teacher, early 20th century, Gurdjieff, who spoke of self-remembering. Remember yourself in any situation.

It's probably what he meant was that it didn't mean remember the story of yourself. Remember the essence. And it's not even remembering it isn't quite perhaps the most, the best way of putting it.

Knowing it, being it. Remembering could lead you to believe that it is some kind of something you think about. Okay, I must think about myself.

So that's, and don't be, you will be challenged in two ways by the human mind in this. Because the human mind senses that it loses its control, predominance. And that's the challenge comes from within.

And it comes from other human minds. Which come disguised as human beings. Most human beings, they carry a disguise of mind.

Or the other way around. The mind disguises itself as a human being. The being is there.

But where? And that is the skill, the art of penetrating beyond mind in others. Of not getting caught up in that density when you are facing another human being.

Not getting caught up in the density, that frequency, that vibrational frequency that is the human mind. Because otherwise you get caught up in it and you become reactive. Which means it stimulates your own mind.

And that's the normal human interaction. You can only penetrate beyond that if you have gone beyond it within yourself. It's only then that you can go beyond that in others.

But with the yes applies here also. The yes to what is, when what is, is a human being right in front of you. That is the form that this moment takes.

And that may be the most difficult yes of all. Compared to which the yes to bad weather is easy. You could be in the Canadian Arctic and that yes would be easy compared to the yes that is needed sometimes, quite often, when you meet a human mind.

And here we have really, I don't remember who said it, perhaps it was Ram Dass who said, that relationships are the sadhana, the spiritual practice for the West. The main spiritual practice for the West is in and through relationships, encountering other humans. That's the challenge, the greatest challenge.

And that challenge has different levels to it. The more you are linked with these humans for some reason through family ties, one could say the more past you share with another human being, the harder it may be. And practice this at first when you encounter relatively uncomplicated encounters with humans that are seemingly superficial interactions.

And it's amazing how people reduce all those interactions, and of those there are many throughout the day, how they reduce them to a means to an end. When you have superficial interactions, ordering a meal in a restaurant, paying for your food, buying a newspaper, meeting someone in an elevator, talking to the cleaner coming in, whatever it may be, many kinds of brief, seemingly interactions that only seem to be a means to an end. Because in the mind-identified state, the present moment is always a means to an end.

So in the mind-identified state, whoever appears in this moment is also a means to an end. It's a dreadful reduction and impoverishment of human existence to live in such a way that most of your encounters with other humans, both superficial encounters and even other encounters, longer, other kinds of relationships are really, in the mind-identified state, a means to some end. Because you're never fully present in the now in that state.

You always want something else out of this now. The now is a stepping stone to where I want to get. So now, all those meetings, whenever you meet anybody, it's a wonderful

opportunity for the arising of space in that meeting, which is love also.

And all that it requires is to look at this human being and to listen if they're saying something. In the spacious awareness, which has no thought in it, just that alertness. This is why we're here.

The whole reason why we're here is to know that state of consciousness. To look the same way you look at a flower or tree. And perhaps at the same time, if there is an interaction, it's taking place.

The waiter comes, you look up from the menu. Two seconds, one second. And then you say what you have to say.

And then he or she asks the question and you look. And then you say what you have to say. There's a little bit of space.

There's part of the interaction where you are not playing a role in that interaction when there is space. When there's no space, it's almost inevitable that you will slip into some kind of role. In a restaurant, and this is unconscious, in a restaurant you play the role of the customer.

And there's a subtle difference then in the way in which you speak to that other human being. And the waiter or waitress may be trapped in their own role, playing the role as waiter, waitress. And you can sometimes see it when they come.

Sometimes some of them play their role well. They get a good tip. Others don't play it very well either.

They play their role reluctantly. And then there are other roles that humans play. And you observe yourself.

Whenever the mind is there, there will be some kind of role that you play. Even to yourself, alone in your room, you play the role of perhaps you're the victim and you're thinking about your victimhood. And I'm not saying stop playing roles.

That would be a big demand. But what is possible is to be there when you do play roles, to know that there's a role, to notice it. You notice it, for example, if you behave and speak differently to that famous person that you meet and the waiter or the person who comes to do the cleaning.

Are there slight or considerable differences in the ways in which you speak to them or interact with them? Perhaps there are. Which means you're playing roles.

Which means the basis for your interaction is a conceptualized sense of self. And you're imposing another conceptualized self on the other person. And two conceptualized selves then play their respective roles.

The famous person may be playing their own role. Unless they are so famous that they've seen the emptiness of it and have gone beyond it. And you might still persist in imposing a conceptual identity.

People do it with spiritual teachers, believing when they meet a spiritual teacher they're meeting somebody important. They're not. They're not meeting anybody except themselves.

They might get nervous when they see a spiritual teacher. Are you nervous when you're meeting yourself? Strange.

But because they have a conceptual identity of somebody important. And then you have another conceptual identity of somebody who is not very important. And you may have a conceptual identity of yourself as important or not important.

Or you might not even quite know whether you're important or not important. Sometimes the world tells you this and sometimes the world tells you that. This includes all opinions you have of yourself.

And that's an interesting thing. That's more concepts. Opinions that you have of yourself are ultimately all parts of roles, concepts, not real whatsoever.

Is it possible to live without having an opinion about yourself? Do you lose something important when you no longer have an opinion about who you are in this life? You just are.

At any moment, when you live in the now, that goes automatically. It falls away. With the awareness that is there, the opinions that you have become unimportant.

The whole conceptual structure falls away. In the immediacy of present moment awareness, the entire conceptual structures fall away. So you are no longer imposing those structures on yourself or on others.

No opinions. Can I live without having opinions about myself? Am I losing something important?

Your opinions may be predominantly good or predominantly bad. And there's a reluctance in both cases of letting go, because there's an attachment. I won't know who I am anymore.

At least I know that I'm a wretched, miserable being. And so the liberating thing is that that becomes unimportant. The more there is that spaciousness in your life, the more those things fall away, the conceptual structures about yourself.

Are not important. They are not who you are. And then you don't inflict them on others.

That's the beauty of it. When they fall away within yourself, that conceptualized self, you don't inflict the conceptualized self on others. Which is, it sounds shocking, but we could say it is the first act of violence.

The very root of violence is to, because it's deadening the humanity, the essential beingness, the essential aliveness of the other human being, which ultimately is no other. And you will only do that if you have deadened it in yourself first. And that is the dilemma of humanity in its present evolutionary stage.

Amazing. So to see, in some ways, we are, this is why it's so wonderful to watch an animal, because an animal too has no opinion about itself. It is.

That's why the dog is so joyful and why the cat purrs. If the dog had an opinion about him or herself, that unconditional love wouldn't be there anymore, because the dog would then also inflict an opinion on you. And it might not be good.

And so the dog would be thinking, oh, here he comes again. So you are meeting another human being in that space of no thought. Brief, perhaps, it's fine.

And there is a true coming together, a true meeting beyond concepts, beyond roles or opinions. And if you should slip into roles, it may now be easier to notice it when it happens, to notice the subtle changes in your behavior and speech when you relate to different kinds of people according to the concepts you hold in your mind about those people, and how you compare your own self-concept with that self-concept. Is he or she more important than me?

And that will determine the role you play. Does he know more than me? See, whatever it is.

And then a little wanting comes in. You want something from he who you think is more than you. Comparison is a continuous thing that the egoic mind structure uses.

Continuous comparison of me with others. I can only evaluate me by comparing me to others. How do I rate here?

And that determines the conceptual structure of me. And then you try to improve it with all kinds of strange things. Name dropping.

Hoping that in you're talking to someone, you drop a name. Hoping that in that association with that name, which is a concept belief, this is a famous person and you know him, that your own self-concept is something is added to it that will give greater worth to yourself. This is why the names are dropped.

In the hope that, but in the eyes of that other person. So you're hoping that this person you are talking to will give you more recognition through dropping the name of

somebody else who is famous or has some other high status. So it's a hope to gain a stronger self.

And name dropping is only a small example of the strategies used by the ego to enhance itself. It's always looking out for something. And so you may observe that even some spiritually advanced people occasionally can catch themselves name dropping.

When I talk to my friend so-and-so, Ram Dass called me the other day. So, and this is, it is whenever you notice something like that, it's not really a personal thing either. It's, this is how the egoic human mind operates.

And the noticing it, and that's the amazing thing. When you notice it, there are still many humans in this world who are trapped in these patterns and don't know it. They are totally those patterns.

Noticing it is actually the arising of space consciousness from where you can see what the mind is doing. And so whenever you notice a pattern, a role that you're playing, some conceptual game, that's a wonderful thing. It's not that now this is the mind from the brief insight that you have there, the realization of what is going on inside you, that could immediately be used by the mind again, and then formulate a judgment about yourself, which could be, oh, you see, you are still deficient in spirituality.

You see, you can't, you're doing it again. All that silly, you're still playing the silly games that everybody else is playing. You're no good, for example, or other things are possible too.

But if you stay with the noticing, that means it's only from the unconditioned dimension of consciousness that you can see the conditioned. From within the conditioned, after you've seen it, you might judge it. That's the conditioned again.

It's only so whatever you see in yourself, even the worst so-called traits of humanity, because all of humanity is within each human being. It may not be manifested, but all of humanity is within each human, and you might discover evil thoughts. I think those thoughts, I, there is no I beyond those thoughts.

There is the deepest, that the deepest I am is not thinking those thoughts. Those thoughts are clouds. They are human thoughts floating around.

And often people believe all their thoughts are, come from them. There is only really one human mind. There's a collective human mind.

And it's almost like clouds can float into your mind from other minds, and you think certain thoughts, and you think it's me. All it is, it's the collective human mind operating. So you can discover all strange things in yourself, and the temptation is there to judge yourself as not yet worthy, or might never be worthy, or you should definitely not be

having these thoughts.

And so you are making them into a problem, a personal problem. The thoughts are personalized, and they become problematic. And you give them more power, because the making them problematic is further thought activity, is further self activity, the mind made self.

It loves whatever dilemma you can find, it loves it. And the more complex the dilemma of yourself, the better. Surely I need 20 years of psychoanalysis to get through all this, to get to the bottom of it all.

Well, if you examined the mind bit by bit, yes, it would take a long time. Where did this thought come from? So whatever you notice in yourself is beautiful, because the noticing, the seeing, is already liberation from being completely identified with whatever thoughts or emotions are happening inside you.

And so you can just stay with the seeing, and seeing it is human, the human mind, that's all it is. And you just watch. That means you are more interested in seeing, being the witness, than getting into the thought, or reacting to the thought, which creates further thought.

It draws you in. And the amazing thing is when you see patterns, especially repeatedly, they tend to drop away after a while by themselves. Don't have to do anything.

Patterns that are no longer invested with sense of self, but are recognized as patterns, they drop away. It's only through complete self-identification with patterns that they go on and on and on. And so the recognition comes with stepping back.

Oh, so now let's go back to the interactions. There is a human being. The question is, even in the briefest of interactions, it is, your life is made up of these things.

Your life is made up of what relatively insignificant moments. The moments that the mind tells you are significant are relatively few. And it might be waiting for one.

It might have been waiting for a long time. I'm waiting for a significant moment in my life. Then I came to a retreat.

I thought that might do it. There's a watch. They have the advertising slogan.

I don't remember what watch, so maybe it's not a good slogan. There's the watch and somebody's looking at it and just saying significant moment, significant moments. So I suppose whenever you look at that watch, that moment becomes significant.

Presumably it's an expensive watch. And so your conceptual self becomes significant when you remember that you're wearing it. A lot of the consumer industry works like that to enhance your sense of self through an image.

A fiction, yeah, of course. But they don't know it's a fiction. It's their self.

So life consists, unless you have an expensive watch, of insignificant. And one of the things that people are waiting for, because in the normal state of consciousness, you're always waiting for something, and really you're waiting for something significant to happen. And not that often does it happen.

And it doesn't last very long. The wedding comes and goes. And then daily existence is there.

Breakfast every morning. And then you're meeting all these people, these insignificant people, in your daily interactions, hoping to meet somebody significant. And not realizing that you're missing the whole thing.

You're missing your whole life in the waiting game, in the conceptual waiting game. You're missing your whole life. And every encounter with another human being is potentially a beautiful meeting with yourself.

It's potentially the most significant event there could be, even the briefest encounter, when there is a recognition of the other as yourself, which is there in the space, the perhaps brief space of no thought, which of course implies no concepts, no roles, no mental positions. There's the end of the illusion of separateness, the illusion of separation, which has been there for so long. And so you meet the ticket collector, the casual person you meet on the plane, or whatever brief encounters in the day.

And each time there's the possibility of being there as space, not as a little me and its role. So that's, and that is a beautiful practice, which then becomes extended to those people with whom you share more past. And this past that you share is of course an accumulation of concepts in your mind about them.

Otherwise there would be no past that you share. There may also be certain emotions that are linked to the concepts about concerning those people. So you carry a little mental emotional form, formation, one could almost say entity, because thought forms are entities, emotional fields are entities, they have a lifespan, they are born, they die.

And so you have a, for each person with whom you share past, you have inside yourself a little mental emotional formation. And that is the conceptual image that you hold in your mind for that person. When you only know, you are completely identified with mind, then to you, that conceptual emotional image that you hold that is based on past is that person.

You are completely trapped in that conceptual emotional formation. So this is, you have constructed unconsciously, not that you have done it, it's been done, it's done automatically, a little entity, a little mental formation that when you are totally identified with that, to you is that other person, is your wife, your ex-wife, your ex-lover, your lover,

your father, your mother, your aunt, or whoever else it may be with whom you are, the person you've worked with for a long time, your boss, whoever it may be, you have that, you carry that. And that wants to remain in place.

What tends to happen is then all your interactions with that human being happening through the filter of that conceptual mental entity that you have, because you are not seeing who is there. You have, there will be things in that human being that you cannot see because they're not part of the image that you hold. And certainly you cannot see the deeper reality of that human being, which is beyond any concepts, any story.

Part of the concepts is the concepts form a little story too. That's part of that formation. So when you are totally identified with that, then that is the agent through which you interact with that person.

You're really interacting with your mental image. Another thing that tends to happen is all you see from that person then after a while is what corresponds and will strengthen that image that you already hold of that person. Other things you may not even see because they are not, perception is selective.

So they will be, that is how your interactions with other humans become very limited and become totally mind dominated. And that is how do you step out of that, that prison which first you have constructed for yourself. You put yourself into a prison because you have formed the same kind of image for who you are.

The me, the little me as I call it, the little me with its story, its memories, its patterns, its reactive patterns. And then the little me forms little other me's around it. And that's the prison cell that people inhabit.

You may not become immediately free of all that, but freedom is here as you step out of conceptual thinking. That's the beginning of that losing its overriding hold upon you, all those conceptual structures. And of course there is a reluctance, the conceptual structures, these little formations, almost entities.

Isn't it amazing that you have a little human, a little being in there that is called my ex-wife and she lives in here. My ex-husband, whatever, or my wife or my husband. After many years of marriage, it is not uncommon for partners, married couple, not, they hardly see each other anymore.

They just have the image of the other. There's nobody there. Just in the distant background there's a body sitting.

And there's the image. Body, image. Many of the old patterns become less empowered.

They just lose their force. And then you might meet somebody you've known for a long time, family, whoever. They don't see.

To them, if they are totally identified with their image, they won't even see what you have changed. They just continue. They want to project the old image.

They are refusing to let go of that. And you might want to say, hello, I'm here. They may also resent that somehow they can feel that there is now a clash between who you are and their image.

And they might become angry because the image doesn't fit anymore. What have you done? I don't like the way you are now.

You're too conscious. So with those, this is a beautiful challenge, those humans with whom you share a lot of past, to bring in that openness in your interactions. The Course in Miracles speaks of relating to another human being without past.

Easier said than done, you might say. In this moment, that human appears in front of you, and you're giving that human being your full attention. The same attention that you give to the tree or the flower.

That human being may be going through their conditioned behavior, and yet you're simply giving the most powerful thing there is. Simply giving, being attentive. Listening and looking.

Listening, looking. To be able to do that, there needs to be a yes. You have to allow that human being to be here at this moment.

You might as well, because they are here at this moment. They are right in front of you. I noticed a little, to illustrate this, a little anecdote.

I once knew a woman, not in a personal, not in an intimate relationship, an acquaintance, who was regarded by most people as one of the most obnoxious people around. Here comes trouble, would be the, when she comes, you would know she would be accusing you of something, wanting something, wanting you to get involved in her problems, complaining constantly. So, those were her patterns, and I noticed once, I was living in a small town where that she also lived.

Two or three times, I noticed there was basically only one high street, as they call it, where the shops are, main street in the town. I was walking in the high street, and more than once, I noticed myself, as I saw her coming the other way, was crossing over to the other side. But then, once or twice, or more than that, it happened that, as I was approaching a corner, she was coming around the corner.

Too late. And then, I noticed a very strange thing. The moment she stood in front of me, there was space and love.

The person that I wanted to avoid, if I could, but when I couldn't avoid her anymore,

there she was, and there was spaciousness and love. And next time, I would avoid her again. But when she couldn't be avoided, it was beautiful.

And a few times in our interactions, she felt something. Something fell away from her, and she walked away as if some weight had been lifted. There was actually love there.

It was penetrating beyond those mind structures. Simply, spaciousness was there. Just a strange thing.

Somebody noticed once that I crossed to the other side, and then asked, why are you doing it? Well, it just happened. There was no decision-making involved.

It's very much like avoiding a thunderstorm or downpour of rain. If you can, if you, let's say, if you walk this way around, and this perhaps is similar, it's a kind of, you know, but if you get caught in the rain, and if you say yes, it's beautiful. So there may be human beings in your life that you would not perhaps choose to interact with, and you don't have to.

Unless life puts you in a position where you do have to. And then at that moment, the totality has determined that this is the ideal situation for you, and for that person. Otherwise, that person wouldn't be there.

So you do not need to seek out those people whom you can't stand. But it may be that for some reason, this person keeps coming up in your life. And the universe is not insane.

The human mind in its present form, perhaps, is insane. But the universe, there is an underlying intelligence at work, and that underlying intelligence knows what it is doing. Things are connected at a deeper level.

All humans are connected. Sometimes it comes to the surface as a synchronistic event, as a coincidence, and you see, how is that possible? It is, and what you see is only a tiny flash that is coming to the surface of things to show you the interconnectedness of all things on a deeper level.

So whatever is at this moment is part of the totality and could not be otherwise. It is because it could not be otherwise. And so to see the inevitability of is, which might mean that this human being that I would rather not be with, that is challenging or difficult for some reason, he or she is in my life.

And that is your teacher then. If there is a human who is there, that human must be my teacher. What is he or she teaching me?

What is this unconscious person going to teach me? It's teaching you this, giving attention, listening, looking, allowing to be this moment as it is, and thus going beyond

conceptual structures in your interaction. And you may well be ready for this, even to practice.

Some of you may have a long-standing issue, perhaps with a parent or somebody very close to you. A long history of judgment, of resentment, carrying that inside and the other person carrying that inside. And it may well be that before you do it in the actual presence of that person, to be there fully in that spaciousness, the image may arise in your mind of that human being.

And you give attention and allow that image to be there in the spaciousness that you are. And perhaps you begin then to penetrate, to go deeper than the conceptual entity in your head. Forgiveness is really that.

Ultimately, forgiveness is letting go of conceptual identity for yourself and others. Give them space. Let's give them space, which is yourself.

Recognize the feelings that you have and the thoughts that you have as formations, as formations that live, a formation that lives inside you. The recognition of it means there is now, through the seeing of it as a formation, there's space around it. That means that is forgiveness, that is freeing.

And because all things are interconnected, it is not uncommon for people who do that on an inner level, for suddenly to happen that that person suddenly experiences something similar to what you experience. Some letting go. Not always the case.

You don't need it. You don't need the other person to go through that also. That's a bonus.

Might happen. But it has happened and people have reported it as miracles. In some cases, it's happened that the moment that shift happened, when they saw the limitations of the conceptual identity they were holding and space arose, which is love around it.

You don't need to, you don't love that conceptual, you don't love the conditioning, that entity, that you might want to have crossed the road to go to the other side of the road for. You love the being because the being is space and you are space. That essential beingness.

And it's not uncommon for humans who've done on an inner level, that shift happened and five minutes later the phone rang and it was that person. I've heard similar stories more than once. The phone rang and after years of no contact, that person rang.

How is that possible? Because of the interconnectedness of all things. So Jesus already pointed to the fact how important in your spiritual life, what he called your enemies are.

How important love your enemies. Now they understood that in a very limited sense and

tried to do it through the structure of thought. Okay, I've got to try and love him.

Okay. I just can't, I hate him. Or you hear that and you just, but you exclude two or three people from that.

I love, of course, him or her, don't even mention. So that's a beautiful challenge. Bringing that into those relationships, longstanding, that have passed, that spiritual practice.

So those people who keep cropping up in your life, you can't get rid of. Use them as teachers or presence. You're supposed to be with them.

Otherwise they wouldn't be there. In some cases, it's family members, grown-up children, parents, doing mad things. You wouldn't associate with them.

You wouldn't want to be with them in the same room. In some cases, this is how people feel. If he weren't my father, my mother, we would have nothing in common except for the fact that he or she is my father or mother.

Some people feel that. Or daughter or son or some other close relation, and they're there for a reason. You may have more in common than you realize.

You certainly have more in common than you realize. This is beautiful, the rain, the truth being spoken and realized here, the possibility of going within. Could there be a better moment?

If you start thinking, yes. If you don't think, no. Then you realize the goodness of this moment, the depth of it, the incredible goodness.

But if you start thinking, you will think about a beach in Hawaii, perhaps, or some other place. It's always some other place. Could there be a better moment can lead you into thinking?

Let me think. Yes, there could be. Or the question, could there be a better moment, can take you deeply into this moment and the beauty and sacredness of this moment, something that thought cannot capture.

And so, awareness. It is known through awareness. It's inseparable from awareness.

So there's always that dimension of the sacred that now is always sacred. And that is amazing, no matter what form it takes. And, of course, naturally, as you become free of the conceptual heaviness, you look and listen, more attention arises to sense perceptions.

The sacredness isn't perhaps in the sound of this rain. It's underneath it. The mind says there's no mystery here.

Water molecules are dripping. And when they hit the ground, they produce a sound. That's the illusion of knowledge.

You still don't really know what it is. The sacredness, of course, is the space that is inseparable from you in which this happens. The world that is arising in you at this moment, the phenomenal, it's arising in that space, the background, the noise foreground.

But it's almost these natural phenomena like rain, it's almost as if space were still coming through even the phenomenon. Somebody once put it beautifully and said, God made everything out of nothing, but the nothingness still shines through. And so the nothingness, the no thingness, the one life beyond form shining through this rain to make the rest of today a time of stillness, of going within, and also being present without with just this moment.

It is unlikely that anything significant, according to the mind, will happen today, but go more deeply into the seemingly insignificant and realize how significant that truly is. There's not even a TV here, so definitely nothing significant. We'll address any questions that have survived in your mind tomorrow in the now.

This is what we've been waiting for. You often hear of the term renunciation in spiritual contexts. And the question arises, what do I need to renounce?

Do we need to renounce the world first? And traditionally, in all spiritual traditions, renunciation in one way or another has been practiced. Renunciation of food, reducing it to a minimum, renunciation of sexuality, renunciation of possessions, personal relationships.

In most of these cases, what the most fundamental renunciation has been forgotten. And that is why in most of these cases, renunciation hasn't quite worked. And that's the most fundamental renunciation.

Once that's been renounced, the rest doesn't matter. And that's to renounce time, and more specifically, future. Because all those who have renounced other things use their renunciation as a means towards an end, a future state to be achieved, an enhanced version of myself, hoping that through different ways of renouncing I can get to that.

To renounce the future is really the only true renunciation, and that is to renounce the next moment. What does that mean? To recognize this moment as the central core of your life.

This moment, not to make it inferior to a projected future moment in your mind. Simply by giving full attention to this moment and always realize how fundamental this is, you automatically renounce investment in future, seeking something in or through future. And that's a continuous, beautiful practice at first, then it's a way of being, of living.

Always a continuous return until you dwell in the now. You can still deal with future as part of your practical life, making appointments, plans for timetable when it's needed, without losing yourself in mental projections. I could plan where I'm traveling next year, now I have to, so look at the calendar, it's still the present moment.

If I project myself mentally to the next event in a year's time, then either some desire of fear will arise, some desire that that event is finally going to make it, make me, I'm finally through it, going to achieve an enhanced me, or fear arises. If we meet again next year and I project myself to that, I might be fearful, say, will I have anything more to say when we meet again? What am I going to say to them then?

I've said it all. And then they'll be dissatisfied, they will go, go home. And so the practice is simply to return to the simplicity of now, and always stepping out of mind and the conceptualized story and identity that wants all your attention.

That includes simple things, when you're traveling home from here, which you're not at this moment, not projecting yourself into the situation that you're going to encounter at home, but be there in the car or the plane, this moment, don't miss this. It can be very beautiful too when your attention is there, the simplicity of this moment. You deal with it, your problematic situation, whose situation is not problematic, when you get to it, and the problematic situation is not that problematic, when you deal with it, whatever challenge there may be in this moment, when you get there, then you look, look, look, attention.

What is it that this moment requires? Then action comes, or no action. Zen has even been defined once by a master as doing one thing at a time.

Another beautiful, the famous story of Zen, when the disciple comes to the master and says, a disciple of somebody, some other master, no, how does it go? No, the disciple goes to the master and says, they met somebody else, another master, they said, who can walk on water. So they asked him, what, can you do that?

Or can you do things like that? Or what can you do? And then, of course, the master comes up with a famous Zen, it's now become a famous Zen saying, when I'm hungry, I eat, when I'm tired, I sleep.

And one other related Zen saying is, when you stand, just stand, when you sit, just sit. And above all, don't wobble. It's an amazing thing to do something completely, to just this, honoring this, truly honoring it is honoring life.

This, whatever form this may take. And we'll come to questions in a minute, I'll stop in a minute. Questions, if there are any left.

So it's a stepping out of the conceptualized universe in the head with its past and future sunshine. Stepping out of that abstraction, making yourself into a mental abstraction,

making your life into a mental abstraction, and carrying what ultimately is a burden, a great burden of mental abstraction that never feels it has completed itself. It always feels something important is missing in this abstraction of me.

But what is it? How can I find that missing piece in that abstract version of me? You don't know when you're identified with it, you don't know it's an abstract version of me, you think it's me.

It is me. How can I find that which completes me? And then you look, and this is the search, everybody's search, on a material level or through something or other.

And on that level, completion is never reached. It always feels incomplete, the me, the conceptual me. Sometimes you think it's complete now, and then something falls out of it, again, a big chunk that held it all together falls out, life does that, and again it feels incomplete.

Not to be absorbed in that abstraction, that conceptualized self, and the only way to leave it is to enter now. That breaks the continuity between past and future. The continuity, if it's not broken, the future will be very similar to the past, it's different, slightly different forms, but basically the same old thing.

Even the future of mankind would not change. Technology, yes, changes, superficial changes, but basically the same warfare, conflict, conflict, unless a shift happens here. So the razor's edge of now, that's where you walk.

And then you feel the pull of past and future, which is a mental pull, which is the pull of thought, because past and future you can only encounter through thought, not as an actuality ever. So you feel the pull of past and future, which is the pull of thought, wanting all your attention again, the conceptualized self that lives in and through past and future. You feel, and sometimes you wobble, or more than that, you get lost in it again, and then you notice it, return to the now.

This becomes then a new way to live, to walk on this razor's edge. The whole world becomes transformed through that. And even the complexity of your life situation loses its harshness, becomes softer, loses its overriding importance.

That's the sense that this matters so much to me, how this event turns out, whether I get this or not, anything, it matters so much. The heaviness and seriousness of things, so serious, if there's nothing else, that entire identity is in that, then it becomes, life is such a serious business. And with the now comes the space, and with that comes a lightness, and a point then comes where nothing is ever that serious.

Even death is not longer that serious. And it's only then that you can truly care for the things of this world, including other human beings. That quality that we call care can only be there when there is presence, there is awareness, now awareness.

It is inseparable from care. Whatever your attention shines upon, always that attention, that is awareness, that current of awareness contains that element of care, loving care, one could say, that flows into whatever attention moves to, it might be a human being, it might be a situation. And that is care.

It is not care, care has another meaning in the English language. The cares of the world, there's a care can be a heaviness too. But this is loving care.

Love, care, even for the world of objects when you relate, because when you speak of relationships and think exclusively of relationships as relationships to other human beings, but equally important is relationships to nature, very important for humanity, how humanity relates to nature. If humanity does not find a right relationship to nature, that's the end of humanity. So to find a right relationship to nature, and even the right relationship to the world of things, to have a relationship to an object that you pick up, and if there's an attention there, there's a certain care.

If there's no attention, all objects in your life are means to an end. Nature becomes a means to an end, and you just begin to destroy it. You don't see it, you don't know what you're doing then, because all you see is a means to an end.

What can this do for me? How much is this forest worth? What can we do with it?

It's future, using it. And then you don't see the forest as it is, which is a sacred space, because you're not in touch with that dimension within yourself, the space within. How can you see the sacred space in the forest?

All you see is a commodity through the mind. It becomes, you are trapped in object consciousness. So you bring that to the forest, and all you see in the forest is the object in the forest tree trunks.

You measure them, and then you know how much it's worth. So truly, the destruction of nature that humans are engaged in, truly the words of Jesus apply, forgive them, for they know not what they do. They truly don't know what they do.

So the space isn't there to know it. And that's why that transformation of consciousness, where you realize the essence of consciousness and the essence of yourself to be space, that's why that is so vital. Otherwise, no change, true change is possible.

I'll start with one or two questions that people have given me on a piece of paper, and then we'll go on and ask questions here, if there should be any. Whether there'll be answers, I don't know. There may be.

And I love Ramana Maharshi, the Indian teacher, who very often would not give answers to questions. So a person came, asked a question, perhaps they had prepared it for a long time, and this is a very important question, and asked the question, and he just sat

there. It's like the question falling into a void.

And sometimes the ego of the questioner didn't like that and felt offended. Is my question not important enough to merit an answer? But at other times it happened that space arose in the questioner, sitting in that spaciousness that came through him, and then the question disappeared in it.

Or a spontaneous answer arose in the questioner's mind out of the space. And usually I didn't know it was that simple. I have been diagnosed with a so-called incurable, though not fatal, virus.

How can I improve my health without using the modalities as a means to an end? Thank you. This may be an important question for a few, quite a few of you.

Disease, fatal or non-fatal, those are just perhaps concepts or beliefs attached to conditions. It's very easy for a so-called disease to immediately become another concept in the mind, especially a so-called serious disease, can very easily become a concept in your mind and becomes incorporated into your sense of who you are. You are someone, this happens very easily.

You can also, if you have observed humans, you may have observed that some humans, for some humans who have had a disease for a long time, their disease becomes almost the central part of their sense of self. I once overheard a conversation in a bus, a woman talking to her friend. There was pride in her voice when she talked about the important doctor who was going to perform the operation for the third time on her the next day or the day after.

There was that sense of, in that egoic sense of self that is always looking for more to enhance itself, it can easily happen that it uses a condition such as an illness in order to gain more attention, in order to gain a deeper sense of self, because this sense of self is always deficient. So then I am a such and such sufferer. And when I speak of surrender, which means acceptance of what is, I'm not speaking of acceptance of an illness or acceptance of yourself as someone who has an illness, that would be strengthening the mind-made sense of self and strengthening the concept of illness.

Acceptance applies only to this moment, not to some situation in your life, only this. And whatever may manifest at this moment as an illness could be pain or disability or discomfort or weakness. And the condition of this moment is as it is at this moment.

And that is what you bring acceptance to, and with that space arises. With this acute pain that is not easy. Acute pain seems to fill up the entire space of your being.

But what else can you do except allow it to be there because it is there. And it has happened in quite a few cases that pain burned up the conceptualized structures of your mind. Pain burned up the ego, became a fire in which the egoic sense of self became

consumed.

And for a few people, this is what happens. There may also be disability in movement, or you may have an illness that you simply know you're ill but there may not even be any particularly serious symptoms, you just know that there is that. Whatever it is, the question is important not to make it into a means to an end, which is the practice of accepting the is-ness of now in whatever form, not in order to achieve something, in order to get better.

But then it's not complete acceptance. But surrender to this. Let the illness force you into the present moment.

That is a beautiful thing. Then the illness becomes the teacher. It forces you into, and particularly if it is a fatal illness, so-called, it may not be.

And of course, in a wider sense, each one of us has a fatal illness. Of course, it's called mortality, an extremely dangerous virus. And it's just a question of time before it hits.

And even knowing the fact of the mortality of your physical could be of the same purpose, if you could remember it every day, as they did in medieval times. Some people, they had a skull on their desk to remind them of mortality. So whenever you sit there, you look at that.

But an illness, or in Buddhist countries, they, Buddhist monks in certain Buddhist countries, regularly visit the morgue. So they are let in, and then they sit where the dead bodies are, and they sit there for a few hours. That forces you into the now.

That's an amazing thing. Don't try to do it here. They'll think there's something very wrong with you.

The illness allow, whatever the condition is, to force you into the now. The illness becomes unhappiness. The illness becomes an unhappy self when you leave the now.

Then it really, then it becomes a me who is ill, who has an illness, who is an ill person. And particularly, if you've been told by the doctor that you only have a limited amount of time to live, whatever he may have said, one year, six months, this is perhaps the worst thing that, in the normal state of consciousness, that could happen to anybody. You go to the doctor and you say, I'm sorry, maybe six to twelve months.

He's basically telling you that there's no future for you. You have no more future. If this doesn't force you into the now, well, and it's happened.

I've met people who are in that condition, and an enormous, accelerated transformation has been happening inside them. They are on an accelerated course of realization. Because ultimately, none of us has that much time left.

It seems, it may seem still, you might think, oh well, 30 years, I haven't probably thought, 20 years, 40 years, maybe I even have 50 years left. It seems a long time. But time is a strange thing.

It's very fleeting. And before you know it, you're faced with very little left. Was that it?

I've been waiting for it to start, and now it's come to an end. Being forced into now by some condition, an illness can do that if used rightly. And the amazing thing is that healing is much more likely to happen in that state of surrender to now.

Acceptance, because there is an energy field there that is very healing, that is space. So there was a well-known doctor who wrote a big book on healing, and the modalities of healing. And he came to the conclusion by in research and talking to people, that in most cases where healing happened, it happened when there was acceptance.

And miraculous healings have happened. But this is not why you accept. And this is why the question is important.

If you're hoping for healing, you're not yet totally here. Because in a deeper sense, when there's complete alignment with the suchness of this moment, you're healed already, in the deepest sense. So it could be an illness that forces you into the now.

It could be some other unpleasant condition, such as being in a prison cell that forces you into the now. Any condition that in the normal state of consciousness would lead to a very miserable sense of self. Any such condition can force you into that.

It could even be somebody close to you going through extreme suffering, such as illness. Or somebody very close to you being in prison, being condemned for a crime, being some form of madness. Somebody very close to you, and perhaps that person very close to you, is not yet capable of surrender and is in extreme suffering.

And then you could easily, you could be drawn into suffering yourself. And again, here again, you can allow such a situation of suffering in your immediate vicinity, so to speak, that is happening to somebody who is very close to you. And he or she cannot yet see the possibility of acceptance.

So you do it for them. And that also often produces miracles, but that's a byproduct. You surrender for them if they cannot surrender.

Whether it be your child or grown-up child who is involved in some madness, whether it be your parent or your partner, or somebody close to you having a serious illness. Why can't they, they can't, they're not perhaps ready yet. You surrender.

Give them space. Let that force you into the now. Because if you leave the now, you suffer.

If you, the moment you leave the now, it becomes very painful. It becomes conceptual, painful conceptual reality. I spoke to a couple last year whose son has been condemned for a serious crime.

That is great suffering. He may not yet be able to surrender, but you can surrender for him. My friend Satyam Nadeen, who was in prison for a few years, reports that after having spent quite a long period in the worst prison in the United States, probably, overcrowded, overheated, violent, you never even knew whether you would reach the next day because people even got killed in there.

Very miserable life situation, especially after having had wealth and luxuries. And there you are in hell. And he was miserable.

His whole life had collapsed. His child taken away. The threat of being put away in an orphanage, he didn't know whether it would happen or not.

His possessions taken away. And there he is in hell. In Florida, a little window, no air conditioning, ghetto blasters, playing loud, heavy metal day and night.

This takes you to the limit, the limit of suffering. This is one way. And suddenly a point came when there was a letting go of resistance because resistance was futile.

You can resist. The pain becomes unbearable, the pain that is resistance, that is a non-acceptance. And finally there's, this is as it is.

Just this. And what collapsed were the conceptual structures of the self. Just this.

And suddenly there was peace in the midst of hell. In the midst of all that uncertainty of what's going to happen to me and what is happening to me. It happened just like that by being taken to the limit.

So what is called, can sometimes be called a limit situation. If you should encounter a limit situation, if you're not yet totally in present moment awareness now, then that will just give you the final push. Life knows what you need.

And if you should need that, you'll probably get it. You may not need it anymore because we're doing it here. It's only those who need it who get it.

Life is not absurd, it only looks like that on the surface. Let's see if there are any other questions. But before we do, I just mention, certain questions are more helpful than others.

And those are questions concerning yourself, perhaps someone close to you, your situation. Less helpful questions are questions that are mental or abstract. Such as, what was the Buddha's incarnation on the planet Mars?

I need to know this. Or questions such as, your teaching does not conform to the standards of Advaita Vedanta school of philosophy. And the discrepancies are as follows.

You say there is a doer, but Advaita says there is no doer. I need to know.

[Speaker 5] (7:22:55 - 7:23:23)

Thank you. I work as a career counselor. I have difficulty reconciling the need to meet one's inner purpose and the need to motivate people to meet their outer purpose using their unique talents, their skills.

So for me there's maybe a conflict or the reconciling is difficult for me to grasp.

[Speaker 1] (7:23:24 - 7:23:37)

Yes. Um, uniting the inner purpose with the outer purpose. Do you feel that has happened in your life, the inner and outer?

[Speaker 5] (7:23:38 - 7:23:42)

Up to now, I've been more concerned with the outer purpose.

[Speaker 1] (7:23:46 - 7:23:54)

But I presume you're bringing consciousness, presence, awareness when you work with people, when you counsel them.

[Speaker 5] (7:23:55 - 7:24:06)

Well, I really care about them reaching harmony with who they are and what they do.

[Speaker 1] (7:24:06 - 7:34:42)

Yes. Thank you. Let's see what answer emerges.

Whatever you do in life, it's not so much a question of what you do, but what, let's see, to put it in the most simple terms, it's not so much a question of what you do, but how you do what you do. So to guide people into finding out what it is that they need to do, not putting the focus in your case, because you guide them, you counsel them, not putting the focus on the what, what is it that I can do for this person? How, what is it that this person is supposed to do?

What am I supposed to say, really? Not to put the focus on what, what kind of help am I supposed to give this person? But to put the primary focus on your own state of consciousness as you sit with another human being.

So not to question the what, but to make sure that the primary condition is met, and that

is in the presence of another person, you are in the state of presence. Out of that state, and this is why this is important having come to our retreat here, because that's the only teaching here, to embody the state of presence when you are sitting with another person is primary. Anything else that comes is secondary, and anything else that comes, any advice, realizations, insights, or any knowing or knowledge that comes will come out of that state.

What to say, how to help, or enabling that person to find the answers for him or herself, which is even better than answers coming from you. Enabling that person to go within and find what it is that would be right for them. That is your task there, and to be able to fulfill that task, I cannot tell you, it would be futile for me to tell you what to say to this person, because that, to be alive and truly an expression of the one intelligence needs to come out of the space of that moment what it is.

And if you bring that space, and you've been learning it here, very often you will notice a shift and a spaciousness arising in the person that you are sitting with. So that is primary. Then out of that, the realization, the insight may come what it is that they need to do, what is right for them.

It may come from you too, or it may come as a guiding question that you suddenly find yourself asking, and so you explore. But it is not, you don't, you no longer have, the structure of meeting these people will become less and less important to you. So you may, if you have a list of things that you ask, you may use them less, or spontaneous questions may arise from within you that are not on your list of questions that you usually ask that person because they are right for that moment.

So it is beautiful to help a person find what is right for them to do, but more important than that is to help a person find their more essential beingness. And your presence is part of that. So bring that, go into, and this applies not just to you, there are many people here who are working with other humans doing some kind of counseling.

This may be a little frightening at first, but the most powerful help you can give is to dwell, to allow yourself to dwell in the state of not knowing while you sit with someone, and then allow the more vital knowing to come out of that, either through you or the other person, or even as some external factor. And this is not easy, it's a shift, it's like jumping off a cliff. You get to the edge, and because you go into the region of not knowing anymore, there's an instinctive withdrawing from that.

Anybody who has gone into speaking to a group of people with prepared scripts knows how frightening it would be if you suddenly lost your script. And what are you going to say? And it's happened sometimes to people who know of one case, a man who was supposed to give a talk, and he was in a hurry in his hotel room, and he got a folder, and when he opened it up and he arrived, it was something total, it wasn't his speech at all.

And there were all these people waiting, and he had to say, I'm sorry, I haven't got my script here. And so there was a moment of panic, and he was, and suddenly he gave the best speech he had ever given. Subsequently, he didn't use scripts anymore.

So not to have, and another word is an agenda, even as me, and this is because you're in a helping profession, it's not easy to step out of the mental concept of me, I have to help this person somehow, I have to be of help to do something to help this person. See how powerful it is to go into that state of not knowing and be comfortable with not knowing, that is just amazing. Just sitting there, first you listen to the other person speak, then some questions may come.

So allow it to arise out of that. And then you will be doing more than career counseling, then career counseling will be the excuse for your spiritual work. And that, by the way, applies to any job you do, as you bring consciousness to it, whatever external activity you may be coming, be engaged in, is no longer the overriding concern.

The overriding concern is the state of consciousness that you bring to it. The activity becomes secondary and is a kind of, it's dressed up in that form, it's only the form. So there's the form of your activity and there's the essence of your activity.

And so it could happen that the form is not very conducive to embodying essence. That's rare. You might be working in a noisy discotheque and there may be an easier way to embody presence.

But if you can't get out of it, maybe they've shut you in there, it was the case in the present, then you do it there. You may be working in some slaughtering animals, probably you would remove yourself. But in most cases, the external form is secondary.

When the transformation of consciousness happened, as it is happening in you now, the form may remain the external form of your activity or it may change. If it remains, this added dimension will flow into it and it will become secondary. If the form has been unsatisfying, if you thought, I'm only a waiter, I'm only this or I'm only that, then suddenly, presence will flow into what you do and you're no longer only that.

It's only an excuse. And very often, change then comes by itself. It's beautiful.

[Speaker 3] (7:34:49 - 7:36:26)

You spoke earlier about living without relying on thought and gave us a couple of examples. Remaining seated until we find ourselves standing up and then we would know it was time to stand up. Or being in an oppressive organization and without going through a decision-making process, awakening one morning and realizing this is it.

I wonder about the place of planning a course of activities designed to produce some set of forms in the future, particularly when they require coordinating the activities of many

people, making a movie, for example. I think I understand the seductiveness of thinking that making that movie will in some way enhance the self. My career has been helping organizations to create visions and goals and plans to bring certain configurations of form into being.

And you mentioned, well, okay, in the course of daily events, you need to plan appointments and such. But if our future is to live without reliance on thought, how do we coordinate activities designed to move into the future without relying on thought? Or am I leading people in the wrong direction?

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:36:31 - 7:42:08)

Using thought but not relying on thought. That is the way one can live. Using thought for certain activities, many activities, thought will come in at some point, even here.

The words would not come out of this mouth if they were not thought, then becoming speech. So even here, thought plays a role, has a function. That which is being spoken comes out of presence.

So thought is linked to that dimension. So for example, you mentioned filmmaking, and that kind of thing involves people who coordinate that kind of thing. It involves hundreds of people, things that need to be dealt with spoken to, coordinated.

And you might think you need a lot of thought for that. For many of these things, if you watch any master, let's even a master filmmaker, you may find that as they are engaged, fully engaged in their work, a large part of that, what they do is a spontaneous arising. A director, for example, a good director who watches is in that he may not be in the rest of his life or her life, but in that field of his activity, that's if he is a master or she is a master, that director is in that state of alertness when engaged in giving instructions, telling people what to do.

How does he know what is right? The master doesn't know it. Thought plays a tiny part in that.

The master knows what is right, and then it becomes words, speech, and then he'll say it. It arises, anybody who has achieved mastery in any field, if you observe how they work, you will see that a large part of their work does not come from thought and all the creative element is not thought. The rest may involve thought.

So those things that do involve, there may be an aspect that is non-creative. Perhaps when the director gets home to his office, there's some paperwork to deal with or something else. So he may need to dictate a letter.

But even there, it is amazing when you live in that inner state of alignment, it's not that thought doesn't operate anymore. You use it. Even that isn't right.

You don't use it. I don't use thought. There's no planning, you might have noticed here.

And each time I come here, yesterday, for example, as I was coming here, I thought, oh, it's questions today. That's good because I have nothing more to say. And then words came and there were no questions.

So it's not so much that thought doesn't operate anymore, but thought becomes the servant of something deeper. You don't lose yourself in that because if you lose yourself in that, then you become, let's again, filmmaking, for example. Then you become a director who people fear, who perhaps a lot of the time is angry and because things are not going the way they should.

And or a director who is trying to figure out what the best way is to how to, what can I do now? That's the difference between a master and somebody who is just doing his or her job. And so it's a new way to live.

It's more sensing and feeling how that works rather than trying to understand what function thought is going to have. Planning is a part that everybody needs to do and there's no reason why you should lose yourself in thought or future by doing any planning. You simply give attention to this, to the calendar, the drawing board, the computer screen, what it is, what is it that this requires?

[Speaker 3] (7:42:10 - 7:42:27)

Yeah, when I stood up, I think I was ready to argue in favor of that we need to rely on the thought form of our schedules at least. And I've realized as you were speaking that one of the things that I may be able to do with the people, the organizations with whom I work is to help them have a different relationship to those schedules.

[Speaker 1] (7:42:28 - 7:48:08)

That's right, yes, the schedules are mind forms. That's right. It's just a wonderful way.

You cannot learn it the other way around. It's always strange when people come and observe those who have mastery in their area and then try to observe the externals, what they do and then try to make it into a system. So movement, beautiful practice.

To do it well, you need to be present with every movement. No movement is a means to an end. You're not trying to get to this place because you're at this place and you're completely at each place.

No, not one second is a means to an end. Otherwise you're not good at it. And how did that happen?

How did anybody ever come up with that? I'm sure it happened because someone who lived in that state spontaneously began to move and perform a very slow dance as a joyful expression, external expression of that state. And then somebody came and said, what's he doing?

And then people gathered around him. This is, it feels so good to just watch this. And after a little while, somebody clever came with a piece of paper and said, now he's lifting his left arm.

Now the right leg is going up. And then he began to teach. It wasn't quite, but fortunately in the case of Tai Chi, because that movement forces you back into that state.

So to some extent it can still work. Then they did it to psychotherapists. There were three effective psychotherapists who were so good, like everybody, all the patients were cured or whatever they're going to call it.

And finally somebody comes, how do they work? Let's observe how they work. Now their eyes go up this way.

Now they are in the same body posture as the patient. And if they asked the therapist, they didn't know they were doing it. It just happened because there was so much alignment with the person that sometimes when the patient sat like this, the therapist would go like, but it was spontaneous, a spontaneous becoming one.

And then it became a system. It loses something, of course. But even that can be helpful.

It's no longer, it doesn't arise out of the core of being, but even that can be helpful. But let's really go to the core and see where the core of mastery lies. And that you can live not just in the performance of your professional activities, but live in that state and when you are going about relatively insignificant, doing relatively so-called insignificant things in your life, traveling from here to there, to not doing anything in particular, interaction with other humans, be there.

So it's a beautiful challenge to bring that presence into whatever situation you're in and then see that, yes, thought is still there. And yet it has lost its overriding, its primary position. Deeper intelligence is informing thought and then it operates.

And then you don't, one characteristic of any action that's performed is that you're not reducing it to something inferior to where you want to get. And that is what the Bhagavad Gita calls, but really it is when whatever you do is not a means to an end, but your attention is fully in the doing. That is karma yoga, consecrated action, you could call it, not inferior to some thought or future achievement.

And then that's, thank you. And that's mastery. Okay.

Yes. Do we have another microphone? Okay.

So we can shift one side, then that side, and then that side.

[Speaker 2] (7:48:12 - 7:49:20)

Hello, my question is about children. My son, who's 13, is here with me this week because an exception was made to allow him to come. And we went through a lot of suffering and I was listening to your tapes in the car and one day my son said, don't take that out, mom, I need that.

That pain body thing makes sense to me. And that was his beginning of a journey into embracing this work. And he's watched a lot of videos.

He's been to some support groups where he's the only kid. And he's now helping me run a presence group. And so far he's the only kid.

But I would love to know what your thoughts are, I guess your knowing is, about how we can bring this and offer it to children. Because I see in him what a beautiful, really healing has happened in him and in me. And his healing has helped me and vice versa.

It's a team thing. So I'd love to hear you speak about how we can bring this to children.

[Speaker 1] (7:49:21 - 7:49:26)

Yes. And do you have contact with other children?

[Speaker 2] (7:49:30 - 7:50:11)

In my work, I rarely work with kids. I'm a psychotherapist and I usually work with adults. And we've been thinking about starting a special group for children.

Maybe some of the teenage kids whose parents have come to the adult presence group. And I've talked with a number of other people here and in the informal gatherings about groups. And I noticed some other people had an interest.

But I haven't yet met anyone who's led a group for kids particularly. Except to use it in, you know, they're working with kids in whatever way they work with kids if they do. Whether it's athletics or teaching.

[Speaker 1] (7:50:11 - 7:58:40)

Yes. Good. Thank you.

Well, perhaps this gathering is the beginning of a few groups like that. Starting and

maybe you have planted the seed for that here. But I do know that more and more people who work with children are bringing this into their work.

School teachers. People who work with younger children. Some psychotherapists who work with children are bringing it in.

A few people are working on books written for children to embody their teaching. And quite a few children I hear from people are exposed to the tapes a lot of the time. And some of them have gone through a shift because the tapes or whatever the teaching is so simple that of course children can understand it.

Sometimes better than adults. And I've had reports of children who've gone through an enormous shift. Simply they've been exposed to that.

Whenever they are driving, their mother is driving, they have to listen to this tape. I know of one mother who her child, she had to listen to it all the time and then for the first time she got a video and so her child said, oh mom is that power of now the movie? So it is the answer to your question is already in this room.

It doesn't need to come. It's already in a few people in this room. The answer to your question is already in you.

It will emerge what it is that you need to do that perhaps even one child of course comes into contact with other children and a child who already experiences that transformation will affect other children naturally. Whether or not in your case there's going to be a more formal structure where you meet with children or children meet your son, meets with children. The answer doesn't come from me but will come from you and it will come as an insight into what it is.

And this is the beautiful thing when what is right will come as an answer from within you. Some people are writing books. I've already seen one or two books that seem to embody some aspect of the teaching such as pain body.

A book I saw that was written in French and somebody sent me the Italian translation of it was a book of drawings that shows a little child getting home and experiencing a pain body attack. It's not called pain body. It's all pictorial.

The pain body is seen as a monster in his belly and then that monster comes out of his mouth and he's shouting and screaming and going to his room and there's this big monster energy looks menacing but yet also benign at the same time filling his whole room and going berserk in his room throwing everything. And finally the monster subsides. So it's a child reads that and recognizes something in him or herself that is there as a pictorial symbol and by recognizing it finding a space between that and the space is already there through seeing it out there.

So many of you especially those who work with children or who have children you're already doing it. If there's teachers some teachers already when they tell me the beautiful things that happen in classrooms as they bring that in and how children respond and ask relevant questions how children become there's one child who has been forced to listen to the tape through her mother who's become her teacher who's been saying the most amazingly wise things and that's that dimension in many children is not yet as hidden obscured by mind stuff as it is in some adults so they respond more quickly.

So it is enough that you embody that and that is spreading to your children to your child and from there it will spread further. Go within and see if there is any more that you can do not you as a limited personal self but how that can come through you through whatever means writing organizing this or that but don't make it into a mental thing that thinks I need to do something. Ask the question and this is the beauty of true answers ask the question and then become still.

Is there more, is there anything else I can do? Let the question, the question becomes like a pebble that you drop into a still lake. The question then disappears in the stillness and then don't pursue that anymore just become still.

A few days later ask the question again whether there's more to do become still and suddenly you know what to do. And this is again it's arriving at decisions that are no longer decisions no longer relying also on some external answer. This is really I'm not answering your question in concrete terms because the answer the true answer of what it is right for you to do will come from within you and it'll unfold from there but don't forget it's unfolding already.

So it's simply a further unfolding of what's happening and when it's so grateful for what's happened and is happening already when you see it you cannot not be grateful for what the change that is already happening has already happened and out of that state of gratefulness it grows more. That's the beauty of it.

[Speaker 2] (7:58:43 - 7:58:44)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (7:58:44 - 7:58:46)

I don't know whose turn it is now.

[Speaker 4] (7:58:48 - 8:00:19)

I've been waiting for many many months to get here and ask something about it. Actually my original question has changed since I've been here but it still relates to the same thing which is this pain body which reminds me of the suffering that Gurdjieff

talked about. What happened that was a change is I've got a band sort of around my chest it seems that when there's any kind of release there's massive anger, grief, fear stuff like that that's held in place by some sort of strange band.

I've been to doctors this year they've said there's nothing wrong with me. My lungs are fine. One of them said he thought it was emotional.

Anyway yesterday as I was trying to climb up the hill that black dog that had been in here yesterday I couldn't breathe and it was like I will never make it up and it was raining and I thought what am I going to do? The black dog passed me he looked at me I looked at him and then the second I noticed him and I was surprised to see him there was no problem. And then I realized there was no problem so the problem came back.

And actually my question at this point is is if I physically try to push through this with exercise do you think I can maybe make some headway so that I can breathe again?

[Speaker 1] (8:00:25 - 8:07:25)

Do the exercise only if you truly enjoy it but not as a means to an end. If you truly enjoy the exercise it's beautiful and it may do something but the enjoyment is that which makes it effective. Not an exercise because you think you should be doing it for some reason.

If without the enjoyment why do the exercise? Then there's something this is mainly at now because there's presence in you this is on a feeling level semi-physical as far as I can see what you feel is physical, emotional somehow where these two meet it could be an emotion it could be purely physical but you feel it very much here. It's no longer so much associated with that there's a danger that the mind will make it and you've given really the key already yourself the dangers the mind will make it into a problem of mine and try to solve it as a problem and then it becomes a dilemma I need to get rid of this and it could take years or it may never happen if that is the case so it is here this is when the dog was teaching you the dog taught because that's how dogs live to be completely with what is so for that for a moment you were completely with the suchness of that including that and that was a freeing it was liberating to see that there is no problem don't give it the heaviness that the mind will endow it with and make it into something that needs to be solved say yes to it it is appearing here at this moment make friends with it whatever comes into the space of now make friends with it because it is that is the most powerful healer because it is obviously an energy field there so it is life it has a particular form that form may have something to do with certain mind forms from your past so it has it the form is temporary life is eternal it has a particular vibrational frequency which is part of its form and that is something to do with certain thought forms partly personal but ultimately all collective from the human collective mind that created it and there's not really it's not a personal fault of yours at all that that became created it's a temporary form and it's alive and it is as it is at this moment so

the key to transformation to make friends with this moment what form it takes doesn't matter say yes to it allow it be with it oh that was the dog's teaching I'm just translating it into words and that was the same dog we were coming in the golf cart that was running after us and I had a brief encounter with him too we looked at each other briefly it was beautiful oh beautiful moment and I knew that he knew we may have to carry on with questions if you can remember those of you who are waiting to ask if you can remember to come up this afternoon as the first people who come up it is now the clock the hands of this clock are pointing to the number 12 let's enjoy this beautiful day and this beautiful moment I or the dog will be here this afternoon